

1077

ILLUSTRATED TIMES

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1870.

PRICE { WITH CHRISTMAS } 4½D.
SUPPLEMENT



LISTENING TO THE CHRISTMAS BELLS.—(DRAWN BY A. SLADER.)—SEE SUPPLEMENT, PAGE 423.

EUROPE AT CHRISTMAS, 1870.

ALAS for the millennium! Alas for civilisation! Alas for human progress! Alas for the Laureate's thousand years of peace! Alas for the time when men shall beat their spears into ploughshares and their swords into pruning-hooks and follow war no more! Alas for the supremacy of right over might—for the advent of the age in which brute force shall lose its sway and mankind shall be governed by moral suasion alone! Here we are at the end of the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and seventy—wellnigh two thousand years since the law of love was proclaimed upon earth—and we seem as far from realising its beneficent influences as ever; as far from the rule of peace on earth and goodwill amongst men as in those distant times which we are pleased, in the great heap of our conceit, to call dark and barbarous.

Dark and barbarous, indeed! Was there ever anything darker, more barbarous, less truly civilised, than that which Europe has witnessed within the last few months! Wars have been made upon paltry pretences and from unworthy motives many a time and oft; but never was a great war undertaken upon pretext more paltry, from motive more unworthy, than that now waged between France and Germany. Never did two mighty and gallant peoples—both for their might and valour famous o'er the world—slay, murder, maim, impoverish, and hate each other for so slight a cause. A mean jealousy of either's welfare—a miserable rivalry as to which should be greatest, which should be thought most brave! France jealous of Germany's unity and consequent strength; Germany intolerant of French influence, and a little resentful, it may be, of French assumption! These were really the sole reasons for beginning the strife; though they are no longer the sole, perhaps not the chief, reasons why it is still carried on with so much mutual vindictiveness. For has not lust of conquest, greed of territory, been developed on one side—another mean motive been added, that is, to those which first prompted the war—and on the other side an obstinate, dogged determination to ignore defeat, and to refuse submission to facts and fate, howsoever strong and decided these may be, and however terrible may be the sufferings continued resistance must entail? This last feeling is one, however, which, while we deplore its results, we cannot call ignoble. So far, then, one cannot choose but sympathise with and respect the present attitude of France, heartily as her conduct at the beginning of the war may be condemned. The same can scarcely be predicated of the position Germany has now assumed. She wars no longer for defence, but for territorial aggrandisement—aggrandisement to which, as men have heretofore viewed these things, she may be entitled by her efforts, her skill, and her success; but territorial aggrandisement nevertheless. Hence it is that she is gradually, but surely, losing the sympathy and approval of every nation in the world—save one, perhaps, and that one a nation shrewdly suspected of a desire to play a game like unto hers. Since the close of August—since the memorable days of Sedan—the relatively moral positions of Germany and France have changed; and the current of the world's sympathy has changed with them. 'Tis time to sheath the sword and spare mankind! is fast becoming the prevalent sentiment among on-lookers at this fearful and destructive strife. To aid in giving force and embodiment to this sentiment, and thereby, if possible, to help on the duty of finding a means of ending the struggle—to stop the baleful work of filling Europe with widows and orphans—let us try to realise the sum of mischief the war has caused to the two peoples concerned.

We believe we shall be far within the mark in reckoning that at least one hundred thousand men have perished—killed outright or slowly by wounds and disease—since Aug. 4, when Weissenburg was stormed and the first big fight of the war took place; that half as many more—that is, one hundred and fifty thousand—have been maimed for life; that another hundred thousand have imbibed the seeds of diseases which will not only shorten the natural duration of their own lives but be transmitted to generations yet unborn; that probably fifty thousand widows, and more than two hundred thousand orphans, mourn the loss of husbands and fathers; that from seventy to eighty thousand other homes have been made desolate by the loss of sons and brothers who were their stay; and that little short of four hundred thousand hearts pine and languish in involuntary foreign captivity. If these estimates be anything like correct—and, though estimate is the only ground we can go upon, we have tried to be moderate in our reckoning—it follows that by this war no less than one million human beings have, directly, been either robbed of existence or deprived of their fair share of happiness and enjoyment in life within the brief space of five months and upon a comparatively limited area of the surface of Europe! Verily, war is a terrible scourge, and the madness of men brings a fearful retribution!

But, great as this sum is, it falls far short of the full measure of mischief caused by the Franco-German war. Putting on one side the inconvenience, stagnation of trade, loss of commerce by loss of markets, and consequent loss of livelihood, endured by neutral peoples—though these, too, are important elements in the reckoning—how shall we number the villages destroyed; the towns (like Bazailles) wiped out of existence; the homesteads burned; the families reduced from comfort, at least, if not from opulence, to absolute beggary; the women and children who may yet perish from lack of food; the men and youths whom misery and want may—nay, must—drive into careers of desperation and crime? How shall we value the means of material comfort wantonly, or unavoidably, destroyed; the industry crushed out or suspended; the fields laid waste; the horses, and

cattle, and sheep, and pigs, and implements of husbandry carried off, consumed, or rendered useless, and for which the unlucky owners will never be compensated; the debts contracted, individually, locally, and nationally, that must take long years of patient industry and severe privation to pay off! A full half of fair France has been made little better than a howling wilderness, which a quarter of a century, probably, will barely suffice to render again as fertile as it was at last midsummer! From Germany the best and most valuable of her sons have been drawn away from productive occupations, many never to return, and but few to go back the patient, sober, industrious, peaceful men they were. And both countries, crippled in their recuperative powers as they needs must be, saddled with burdens that will bear hard upon the children and the children's children of this generation. The one ruined absolutely, materially; the other not much less so; in both, civilisation and progress of all kinds indefinitely postponed; and in Germany, at all events, whatever may be the political future of France, liberty sacrificed to military glory. Does the Book of Time present a sadder picture? Do human annals record a greater mass of evil wrought in so short a time, and for so inadequate a cause?

And even yet we have not exhausted the catalogue of mischiefs produced by this unhappy war. The worst is still untold; for who shall gauge the force or hope to obviate the effects of the immortal hate, the memory of wrongs (real or imaginary), the longing for revenge, the resolve to wipe out disgrace, which the struggle between Germany and France has engendered, is engendering, and must engender and deepen the longer it is continued? One anecdote out of several told to us by a gentleman just returned from France will suffice to indicate how bitter the feeling there is. A merchant of Lyons—which has not yet suffered as other parts of France have—pointing to his son, said, "That boy is now fourteen years of age; he has seen something, and heard more, of the misery inflicted on his country. In seven years he will be able to bear arms; he shall then join his brother, already in the army, who, if he lives, will then be twenty-nine—a good fighting age; and between them they shall help to avenge the wrongs and wipe out the disgrace of France, if it be not done before." That speech is significant; and if the spirit it displays be not exactly of the model Christian sort, it is yet one which we at least cannot bring ourselves to condemn very strongly. So, then, this war, waged so long after the great event Christendom is now engaged in commemorating ought to have made wars to cease, has not only produced enormous present death and suffering, and pain and ruin, but has laid the foundation for a renewal of all these horrors in time to come. Not a very pleasant prospect to contemplate, this; and not exactly the state of things one ought to have found obtaining in Europe at Christmas in the year of grace eighteen hundred and seventy. We wish not to set up as judges of other men; at this season, especially, we shrink from appropriating blame; but somebody has contributed to producing this objectionable state of affairs, to frustrating so largely the Divine mission of mercy, peace, and love; and terrible, indeed, is the responsibility, the crime, that rests upon those who have done so, be they many or be they few. For us, we have but one duty to perform, and that is to honestly chronicle the details, to faithfully delineate the horrors, of grim-visaged war; in the hope that we may thereby help to sicken warriors, in particular, of their horrid trade; and to make mankind, in general, less tolerant than they are of the professional blood-spiller.

MINISTERIAL RUMOURS.—According to a prevalent but doubtful rumour, Mr. Stansfeld will succeed Mr. Bright as President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Baxter becoming Secretary of the Treasury, and Mr. Shaw Lefevre Secretary of the Admiralty. Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Mundella, and the Marquis of Lansdowne are mentioned for the secretaryship of the Board of Trade, should Ministerial changes create a vacancy in that office. It is believed in some quarters that the redistribution of offices will not involve any new admission into the Cabinet; but at present nothing is positively known or decided.

DEATH OF MR. PATRICK M'DOWELL, R.A.—The Royal Academy has just lost one of its most eminent sculptors in the person of Mr. Patrick M'Dowell. Mr. M'Dowell, who at the time of his death had entered his seventy-first year, was a native of Belfast, where he was born, on Aug. 12, 1799. His father having met with some reverses of fortune, at the age of eight he was sent to a small school in Belfast, where the first symptoms of his genius displayed themselves in the direction of art by the copying of such models as chance threw in his way. At twelve he came to England with his mother, who apprenticed him to a coachbuilder in Hampshire; but the bankruptcy of his master set him free, and, fortune having made him acquainted with a French sculptor, he found an opportunity of improving the talent which was struggling within him, and which longed only for an opportunity of development. He could hardly have been of age when we find him engaging a studio near Euston-square, and setting up as a sculptor on his own account. After some previous attempts, which were only partially successful, he made his first essay on an ideal subject, which he took from Moore's "Loves of the Angels." The first commission with which he was intrusted for a group in marble was from Mr. E. S. Cooper, formerly M.P. for Sligo. The subject was "Cephalus and Procris;" the conception and style of execution were such as to fix at once Mr. M'Dowell's position in the world of art. The work which fully established his fame, however, was his charming figure of "A Girl Reading," which was afterwards repeated for the late Lord Ellesmere. Shortly afterwards he was commissioned by Mr. T. W. Beaumont to execute two large groups, of an ideal character. His "Girl Reading," already mentioned, ultimately brought him, as might have been expected, an abundance of commissions, and no doubt helped to secure for him his election to the rank of an Associate of the Royal Academy. In 1846 he was elected to the full honours of a Royal Academician. He had scarcely completed his first large group for Mr. Beaumont when that gentleman, desiring that the sculptor should visit Italy, offered to supply him with the necessary funds. This proposal was gratefully accepted by Mr. M'Dowell; and, after an absence of eight months, during which time he visited every object worthy of remark in his own special branch of art that was to be seen in Italy, he returned to England and completed his "Love Triumphant." To this succeeded "A Girl at Prayer," "Cupid," "Early Sorrow," "Psyche," "The Death of Virginia," and "Eva," all of which formed leading attractions in the International Exhibition of 1851. In 1846 Mr. M'Dowell was intrusted by the late Sir Robert Peel with the execution of one of the national statues of British Admirals (Lord Exmouth) for the decoration of Greenwich Hospital. His subsequent works comprise a marble statue of Sir Michael O'Loghlen, for the Four Courts, Dublin; those of Pitt and Chatham, for the House of Lords; a statue in bronze of the late Earl of Belfast, for the town of Belfast; one in bronze, for the city of Limerick, of the late Lord Fitzgibbon; a statue in marble, "The Day Dream;" a group in marble, for Mr. Thomas Baring, M.P., "The First Thorn in Life;" a statue for the Marlborough House, from Moore's "Loves of the Angels;" one of J. W. M. Turner, for St. Paul's Cathedral, the competition for which was confined to members of the Academy; and a statue in marble of the late Lord Plunket, for Dublin, &c.

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

A balloon from Paris, with news to Saturday last, has descended in the department of the Marne. Despatches to the 11th inst. had been received from M. Gambetta, but it is said that the people were not discouraged by the intelligence from outside. Perfect tranquillity reigned in Paris, and there were provisions in Paris sufficient to enable the city to hold out for a long time. The Russian military agent, Prince Wittgenstein, and some other diplomatists have been at last permitted to leave Paris. They say the city has bread, salt meat, and wine for another two months.

At Dijon the Prussians lately summoned thirty of the notables of the place before the commandant of the town, and explained to them that they required forty hostages who would be sent off to Germany, where, however, they were informed, they would be well treated. Twenty were taken from Dijon, ten from Vesoul, and ten from Gray. It was in vain they protested. The first twenty on the list in the hands of the Prussians taken from Dijon were sent off to Germany, with the exception of M. Gaulin, a banker, who was replaced by M. Jeanne, Professor of Law.

A correspondent at Bordeaux, writing on the 14th, says that great uneasiness prevailed in Government circles, and the most enthusiastic friends of the Republic felt that, if General Chanzy, the best French commander the war had produced, could merely boast of defending his positions, the prospect of the Army of the Loire relieving Paris was a very forlorn hope indeed.

ITALY.

The committee of the Chamber of Deputies has approved the bill which guarantees the prerogatives of the Pope and the liberty of the Church.

SPAIN.

Senor Morel, in his financial statement to the Cortes, announced that the deficit of the last two years was 323,000,000 reals. The Government is able to meet the external debt out of the revenues of the country. In respect to its internal engagements, he proposed the issue of Treasury bonds to the amount of 900,000,000 reals, bearing 12 per cent interest, and redeemable at the price of issue at intervals of eighteen months. Signor Morel declared himself in favour of the poll tax. He had not the intention, as was attributed to him, of covering 200,000,000 of the deficit by the creation of new taxes; on the contrary, he was opposed to the introduction of any new tax, preferring to obtain a larger amount than previously from the present taxes. He deprecated any new loan, and declared it impossible to modify the existing debts without a previous understanding with the bondholders. He considered it possible by certain combinations to effect economies amounting to 50,000,000, and to reduce certain expenses by one half.

LUXEMBURG.

The semi-official *North German Gazette* says that the Prussian Government is ready to submit its complaints of the violation of neutrality by Luxembourg, as well as its claim against the Grand Ducal Government, to arbitration. This course would in no way affect the position of the duchy as a State.

The Luxembourg students at the University of Ghent have addressed to the Patriotic Committee a protest against the charges brought against a people "who have never ceased to practise the laws of humanity, honesty, and justice—charges which are based upon false statements, and which aim at nothing less than the violation of the most just and most legitimately held rights that a people ever possessed."

GERMANY.

A letter from Berlin says that it has become necessary to keep a closer watch over the French officers who are prisoners of war in Germany, owing to the increase in the number of those who have broken their parole and made off to France. In the fortresses on the Rhine permission to frequent the theatres has been withdrawn, and no excursions are anywhere permitted. None of the prisoners are allowed to visit Berlin.

The Baden Chamber of Deputies has unanimously ratified the Federal treaties and sanctioned the military convention with Prussia, with only one dissentient voice.

The Lower House of Hesse-Darmstadt has approved the Federal treaties, together with the supplementary modifications, by forty votes against three. The demand of the Minister of War for a credit of 3,662,000 florins to continue the war was unanimously agreed to.

RUSSIA.

The Moscow Town Council having, in their congratulatory address on the Black Sea question, petitioned the Czar to add liberty of the press, tolerance of all religions, and other reforms to the blessings he has conferred upon his subjects, their address has been returned, with a reprimand.

GREECE.

A new Cabinet has been constituted at Athens. It is composed thus:—M. Comondouros, President of the Ministry and Minister of the Interior; M. Colostavios, Minister of Justice; M. Botzaris, Minister of War; M. Sotiropoulos, Minister of Finance; M. Christopoulos, Minister for Foreign Affairs; M. Anargyros, Minister of Marine and Public Worship. All the new Ministers are members of the Chamber.

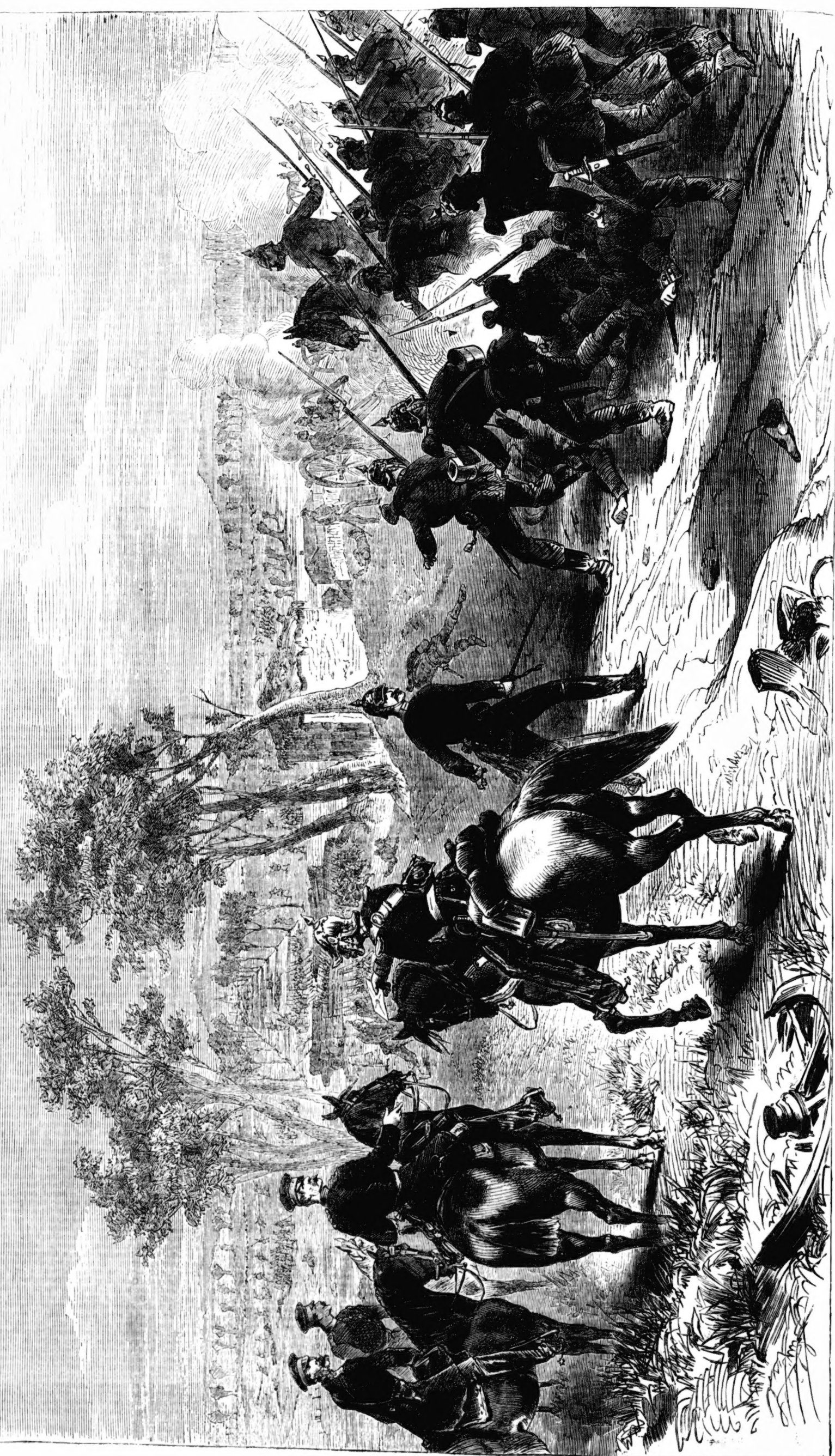
THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. Charles F. Adams, the former American Minister in London, in a speech before the Historical Society, advised moderation on the part of the United States regarding the Alabama claims, and deprecated the efforts of certain politicians to lead the country into war. The *Tribune* says that the existing dormant war between Great Britain and the United States should terminate, the bitterness and resentment here having greatly died out, and Great Britain showing a willingness to discuss the question of the Alabama claims on a basis more compatible with American honour. Regarding the fisheries, the *Tribune* says that serious men recognise the sinister aspect of the question, but it hopes that Great Britain will act promptly on the vigorous reclamation which General Schenck is sure to present.

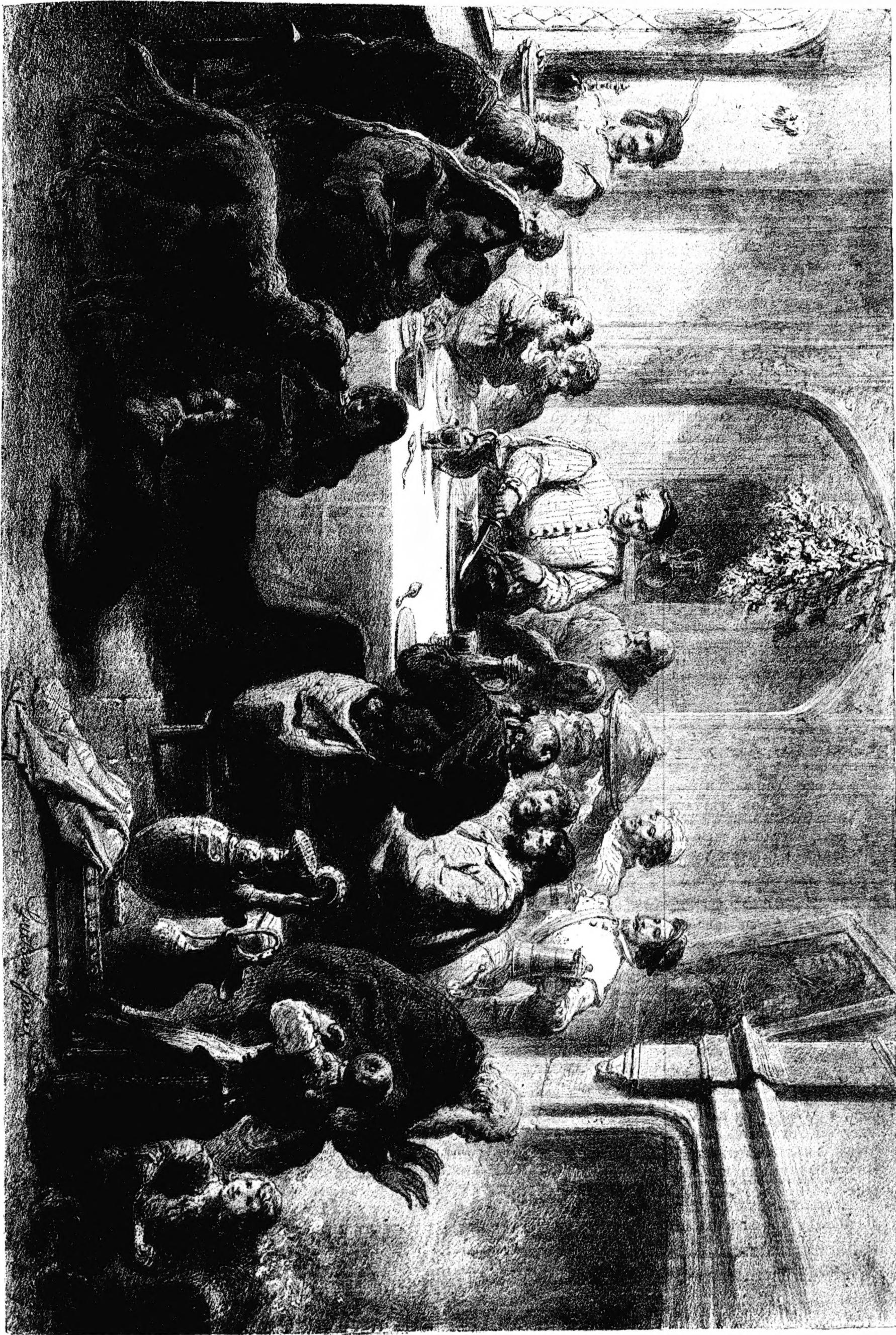
The report of the Bureau of Agriculture says that in October the cotton crop was estimated at 3,500,000 bales, but the fact of the unfavourable contingencies then anticipated not having occurred justifies the estimate being fixed at 3,800,000 bales. There is an increase of 30 per cent in the sugar crop in Louisiana, Texas, and Florida.

EDUCATIONAL.—A great effort is being made at Leamington to secure a high-class education for the inhabitants and visitors in that fashionable and interesting locality. On Monday last the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, Lord Leigh, and a numerous assembly of local and county notabilities, assembled to award the scholarships and prizes gained during the term by the successful students, and to open the new boarding-house just erected in the western side of the quadrangle of the college buildings. The boarding-house is designed and fitted for forty boys on the most modern plan, and will add much to the comfort of the students. Dr. Temple, Bishop of Exeter, and Dr. Barry, of the City of London School, were, unfortunately, prevented attending; but many leading educationalists from Oxford and other places were present, and expressed their satisfaction with the arrangements and curriculum of the college under its new management.

THE AUSTRIAN ARMY.—A pamphlet, attributed to the Archduke Albert, has just been published, its object being to urge a reorganisation and strengthening of the military power as essential to the very existence of Austria. It gives statistics showing that while Germany can bring 24 per cent of its population of 38,500,000 into the field, or from 1,283,000 to 1,347,000 men, Austria, in the spring of 1871, could only muster 911,000. Germany can bring into the field 699,000 infantry against 579,000 Austrian bayonets, 74,375 cavalry against 49,460 Austrians, and 1794 guns against 1218 Austrian cannons. While, moreover, Germany to time of peace has 65,000 horses, Austria has only 27,265, so that on the outbreak of war 29,000 have to be procured. The writer proposes that the Austrian infantry should be raised to 771,000, the cavalry to 60,000, and the guns to 1568; that the Enns line should be fortified, Olmutz and Comorn strengthened, Pesth and the Carpathian passes fortified, and Bohemia made more secure. The expense of these works is to be defrayed by a loan.



THE WAR: GERMANS ADVANCING TO THE RECAPTURE OF BOULGET, NEAR PARIS — (SEE "ILLUSTRATED TIMES," DEC. 3, PAGE 355.)



A CHRISTMAS DINNER IN THE OLDEN TIME.—(DRAWN BY GUSTAVE JANET).—SEE PAGE 410.

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for JANUARY.

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2. "Patty." Chapters I.—IV.
3. "Mr. Dickens's Amusements Theatricals: A Reminiscence."
4. "The Competitive Examination System in China."
5. Lord Hobart on "The Alabama Claims."
6. "La Morte Vivante."
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8. "A Bull Fight and After-Thoughts." By J. P.
9. "Into Versailles and Out." Part I. By John Scott Russell, F.R.S.

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NOTICE.

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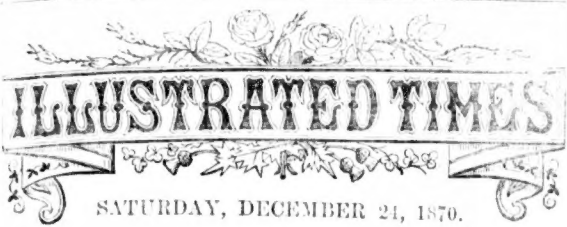
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1870.

THE SEASON AND ITS QUESTIONS.

WHAT are the questions of the Season? Of one thing there is no doubt whatever—namely, that though we should all desire to avoid the insincere use of customary forms, Christmas is a time at which we may justly take occasion to remind ourselves and each other that, in New Testament language, "we, being many, are members of one body;" and that fighting, trading, and social order do not make up a life which by itself would be worth living, or, indeed, capable of being lived. We cannot, at our present distance from the millennium, get along without ceremonies and reminders; and the Christmas festivity, after all deductions, has been an institution without which, so far as we can see, the world would have been a great deal worse than it is. And who could wish that? Whatever good things, in all kinds, reckoning from above, and from below too, belong to Christmas, we heartily wish all friends who may read these lines. Nor do we at all quarrel with the eating-and-drinking view of the season. Eating and drinking constitute the simplest of pleasures, and the one which can most readily be made social. Even an idiot understands a plum-pudding, and the eleven garrotters who a few weeks ago were thrashed for their own good and ours (at least, that was the intention) can scarcely fail to perceive over to-morrow's dinner that there are people in the world who wish well to them, and to each other. This is something; though it is little enough, considering the immense significance attached to the occasion.

Great changes have come over the understood scope of the festival, and yet it is incalculably more observed than ever it was. For the immensely greater prominence of the children in the modern celebrations of the day we are largely indebted to German influence, and not without some obligations to the late Prince Albert. Besides this, the religious character of the feast has, in spite of all appearances or pretences to the contrary, largely died away; what remains of it among "the masses" is of no such significance as would need to deter any clever enthusiast who thought proper from attempting to reintroduce Thor-worship or Druidism, human sacrifices and all. The masses, call them by what name you will, are fatalists and idolaters all the world over; teachable by, but not without, a free use of such influences as induced Roman ladies to change a certain pagan amulet for the Cross, or the Scandinavians to "re-christen," so to speak, the helve of Thor's mallet, the sign they had used in water on naming a child by the name of the Founder of Christianity. Mormonism is paganism of the grossest kind; yet it is found easy to make Mormonites. The religion of Plato, or of Gisi the Soursop, was worth a thousand of that creed. You can hardly read of Freya, with one hand on the house-mill and the corn-flower in her hair, without almost believing in her; and others besides Keats, Schiller, and Mr. Disraeli's Tancred have cried, "Angels watch over me, or my brain will turn!" as they have contemplated the fair forms of the beautiful mythology of Greece. But who can believe in fat Joe Smith, the Golden Plates, and in a supreme being who eats his dinner as we shall to-morrow? The answer is before us. It is easy, even for a stupid, ignorant, and unskilful propagandist, to make people by scores of thousands believe in Joe Smith. In fact, if you give the masses plenty to eat and drink, they are like Theodore Hook, who, when he was asked if he would subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, said, "Oh, yes; forty, if you like." In what sense the majority of "the masses" can truly be called Christians, wherever they may worship or whatever name they may be known by, is a profoundly difficult question.

Nor is this all. It has been over and over again maintained of late years by devout and learned men that, if the Apostles were to rise from the dead, and, all difficulties of language being surmounted, to walk into our churches and chapels and hear the sermons, they would not have the remotest idea of the religion of the preachers; so wildly would they find their own teaching travestied by the ingenious efforts of successive generations of theologians. But "the masses" and the middle classes who go to church and chapel form the bulk of the population of Europe and America; and if all this is even a remote approximation to the truth, what a picture does it make!

Nor is this all. The Christian and Hebrew records are being subjected—and that at the hands of accredited and authorised scholars in the English Church—to a revision from which the English Version will emerge a book very different from what it now is. When we were a boy, though Porson and the best scholars treated with scorn the "three witnesses" text, it was almost "infidelity" for most people to doubt its authenticity. Now, it is gone like a summer's cloud—not a Greek scholar in the world, orthodox or heretic, could stand up to defend it without getting "dunce" chalked on his back. It will never appear in a revised English Bible. Nor will the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer. That, also, is

gone for ever. It is not twenty years since a Dissenting minister was nearly driven into a lunatic asylum, and was quite driven out of his senses for a time, by the persecution which followed upon his expressing in private his doubts of the authenticity of a certain portion of the New Testament. At that time, scholars were pretty much at one about the matter; but it was almost as much as a clergyman's life was worth to hint a doubt. But now? Why, that also is gone. And, if we stop short in speaking of the admitted changes in what was but yesterday supposed essential to Christianity, it is not for want of material, but from excess of it. And yet, do the great truths upon which the duty of love to God and love to man repose stand less firm to-day, or more firm, than they did in the days when there were plenty of so-called "Christians" in England who would have burnt Porson if they could? This question will receive a practical answer to-morrow in millions of happy homes, and all through the season in countless deeds of Christian kindness and living faith.

SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

HER MAJESTY, accompanied by Princesses Louise and Alice and Prince Leopold, left Windsor Castle, on Monday, for Osborne, there to pass the Christmas holidays.

THE PRINCE OF WALES has kindly stated that "it will afford him great satisfaction to preside at the anniversary festival of the Earlwood Asylum for Idiots, in the ensuing year."

THE KING OF PRUSSIA received the deputation who came to Versailles to offer him the Imperial Crown on Sunday. There was a large assemblage of Princes and Generals. The King is said to have been much moved, as also were all present. Afterwards the deputation were received by the Crown Prince. There was a Royal banquet at night.

THE DUC DE GRAMMONT has arrived at St. Petersburg, where he intends to remain for the present.

MR. KIRK, M.P. for Newry, died, on Monday morning, at his residence, Anna Vale, in the county of Armagh. Mr. Kirk has been for some time in delicate health. He represented Newry from 1852 to 1859, being the only Presbyterian returned by an Irish constituency. He was again returned at last general election, having polled eight votes more than his Conservative opponent, Viscount Newry.

MADAME CELESTE has retired from the stage, after having spent nearly forty years in ministering to the amusement of the public. She made her final appearance at the Adelphi on Saturday evening, and received a hearty greeting from a large and brilliant audience.

HER MAJESTY'S SHIP PSYCHE, with the eclipse expedition on board, has struck on a sunken rock near Catania. All hands were saved, as well as the scientific instruments, and the captain telegraphed to Malta for assistance.

THE NATIONAL REVENUE from April 1 to Dec. 17, amounted to £14,184,053, as compared with £18,841,038 in the corresponding period of last year. The expenditure has amounted to £16,445,455. The balance in the Bank of England on Saturday last was £3,562,203.

THE CITY COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS, on Tuesday, resolved to spend £20,000 in opening for carriage traffic the roadway on the northern side of St. Paul's Cathedral, and in throwing into the public way a large space of ground at the western end of the building, now the property of the Dean and Chapter.

THE PANTOMIME AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE this Christmas has been written by Mr. Farnie, and illustrates the voyages of Gulliver to Lilliput and Brobdingnag. Miss Caroline Parkes will be Gulliver, Master Percy Kosselle Emperor of Lilliput, and the other principal characters will be played by Messrs. Friend, Yarnold, &c. The Lilliputians will be represented by 150 children. The ballet will number one hundred. The pantomime was produced, under Mr. E. T. Smith's direction, on Wednesday last, and continued daily.

MR. ROSE, jun., a farmer, living at Begbroke, near Oxford, was thrown from his horse while following the Heythrop hounds, last Saturday, and dislocated his neck. He died immediately.

FATHER HYACINTHE delivered, in French, an address on France and Germany, at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover-square, on Tuesday afternoon. The proceeds of the lecture, which was listened to with deep attention by a crowded auditory, will be devoted to the fund for the relief of the French peasantry.

A DEMONSTRATION OF SYMPATHY WITH THE FRENCH REPUBLIC took place in Trafalgar-square on Monday afternoon.

TWO DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS OF THE NORTH GERMAN PARLIAMENT, Herren Bebel and Liebknecht, and another gentleman, Herr Hepner, have been arrested at Leipzig on a charge of high treason.

MR. FRANCIS G. FAITHFULL, M.A., of the War Office, private secretary to Lord Northbrook, and late assistant private secretary to Sir John Pakington, has been appointed clerk to the Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors, vice Fisher, resigned. Mr. T. Digby Pigott has been appointed private secretary to Lord Northbrook in succession to Mr. Faithfull.

A GREAT PROTESTANT MEETING is to be held in London next month to consider what steps should be taken with respect to the declaration of principles by her Majesty's Government in reference to our assumed national obligations to the Pope, as indicated in the recent letter from Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Dease, M.P.

SHORTLY AFTER THE ASSEMBLING OF PARLIAMENT, on Feb. 7, important estimates will be submitted for the approval of the House of Commons, with the object of increasing the efficiency of the naval and military forces of the country.

A WIDOW, named Stevenson, residing in St. Gregory's, Norwich, has attained her 101st year. She has a daughter seventy-seven years of age. This daughter is a widow, having lost three husbands. She is, however, about to marry again.

A FELLOW was brought before one of the police justices recently, charged with being intoxicated. "Well, why did you get drunk?" "See here," was the reply, uttered in a hiccup and accent of a drunken man; "What did you give license for?"

LARGE QUANTITIES OF FLOUR are now exported from Southampton to France. Quantities of pickaxes and shovels for military purposes have also been exported to the same country from the above-named port during the past week. The French egg and poultry vessels from Normandy take in considerable stores of coffee, sugar, &c., at Southampton.

THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES have established seventy-four post-offices in Alsace since Oct. 1. In thirty-four other places where French offices formerly existed it is at present impossible or undesirable to open any. These establishments employ 87 North German, 17 Bavarian, 9 Wurtemberg, and 8 Baden officials, 25 assistants, 58 persons formerly French letter-carriers, and 208 country postmen.

THREE MORE DEATHS have resulted from the explosion in the cartridge factory of Messrs. Ludlow at Witton. Altogether seventeen were killed on the spot, and twenty-four died in the hospital. The funeral of one of the victims was attended by a great number of persons.

"YOU can do anything if you have patience," said an old uncle, who had made a fortune, to his nephew, who had nearly spent one. "Water may be carried in a sieve if you only wait." "How long?" asked the petulant young spendthrift, who was impatient for the old man's death. "Till it freezes," was the cold reply.

MR. GEORGE ANDERSON, M.P., as arbiter between the Scotch puddlers and their employers, has given his final award. He adheres to that formerly issued, to the effect that the puddlers should receive an advance of 6d. per ton, and that the masters are entitled to a like reduction on all such "doubling" as has been paid for at the rate of 1s. extra. A similar dispute in the North of England trade has also been settled by arbitration.

THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH, at a meeting held on Monday, resolved by a large majority to discontinue mixed classes for the study of medicine.

THE CHIEF CORNER-STONE of the new General Post Office, at the corner of Newgate-street and St. Martin's-le-Grand, was laid, on the 16th inst., by the first Commissioner of Works. The building will have a total frontage of 430 feet, and its estimated cost is £129,700.

A NEW SOCIETY called the "Indian Reform Association" has been formed in India under the auspices of Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen, having for its object—1st, female improvement; 2nd, temperance; 3rd, charity; 4th, cheap literature to the poor; 5th, education for the working classes and industrial schools. Persons of every creed and colour are invited to co-operate in furthering the interests of the association.

MUSIC.

At Christmas time concert-givers take a holiday, as well as concert-goers, and musical entertainments during the present week have been "conspicuous by their absence." But, apart from the great winter festival, a reaction must have come after the exertions in connection with the recent Beethoven centenary—exertions honourable to those who made them, though exhaustive to the music-loving public. We must glance briefly at what was done. On Friday week, the eve of the great master's hundredth birthday, his Mass in C and "Mount of Olives" were given in Exeter Hall by the Sacred Harmonic Society, under Sir M. Costa's direction. These works are fairly representative of Beethoven's power in concerted music; the first especially being distinguished for charm of treatment and varied effects. In the "Mount of Olives" greater prominence is given to the orchestra; and the general handling of the subject is too operative in style for English taste; nevertheless, the work is emphatically one to be heard by real amateurs with interest and pleasure. The performance of both was more than respectable, though the soloists—Madame Sinico, Mdle. Drasdil, Mr. Rigby, and Mr. Lewis Thomas—were not faultless as a body, the ladies wanting greater knowledge of the work they had to do. Last Saturday, the actual birthday, there were three performances of Beethoven's music, the first at St. James's Hall, under Mr. Chappell's auspices, when a selection of the master's chamber music was given. The programme included the third and last of the great Rasoumowsky quartets; a piano-forte sonata, played by Mr. Charles Hallé, and other compositions of special interest. While this was going on, a crowded audience listened at the Crystal Palace to the Choral Symphony, the Choral Fantasia, the overture to "Prometheus," and a host of smaller pieces, among which were the "Thirty-two Variations on an Original Theme," played to perfection, as was the solo of the Choral Fantasia, by Madame Arabella Goddard; "Adelaide," sung in Mr. Vernon Rigby's best manner to Madame Goddard's accompaniment; and "Keunst du das Land," given in most artistic fashion by Herr Stockhausen. The Choral Symphony was played by Mr. Mann's orchestra so as to defy criticism, and only when the voices essayed to render Beethoven's most unvoiced music were shortcomings perceptible. But, faults notwithstanding, the performance was highly creditable; and it may be said of the entire concert that it proved worthy of the occasion, and did fitting honour to the master whose birth it celebrated. Last Saturday evening Mr. Mapleson opened the doors of Covent Garden Theatre for a special representation of "Fidelio," bringing his company to London on purpose. He was rewarded by a very full attendance; the audience, in turn, being rewarded by a performance in many respects excellent. Mdle. Titiens was superb as Leonora, and never impersonated that great character with more power and truth. She was applauded enthusiastically after each act, and several times called before the curtain. Madame Sinico (Marellina), Signor Poli (Rocco), Signor Gardoni (Florestan), and Signor Rinaldini (Jacquino) were more or less good; but Signor Caravoglia (Pizarro) acted and sang in a manner barely tolerable. His notions of the villain of Beethoven's opera and of Beethoven's music may be consistent, but are certainly far from truthful. The orchestra did well, under Signor Arditi's direction; and a good orchestra, like charity, atones for a multitude of sins.

NEW MUSIC.

Aria, Larghetto, Gavotta, and Corrente, from Martini's Sonatas for Pianoforte. Revised by Carl Banck. London: Duff and Stewart.

Admirers of the old school of music will welcome this reprint, since it places in their hands some of Padre Martini's choicest movements. The aria is a gem of the quaintest beauty; the larghetto displays much of the composer's ingenuity, being written in three real parts, each a melody in itself; and every way worthy of these are the gavotta and corrente. As examples of a style now superseded, but which gave morescope for the exhibition of genuine attainments than that now in vogue, these selections have an interest which should recommend them to the notice of every amateur.

Palestine. Grand March for the Pianoforte. By E. L. HIME. London: Duff and Stewart.

The form of this march is not new, keeping as it does to the classical model adopted, if not invented, by Mendelssohn—viz., a bold and animated movement, followed by one in decided contrast, and winding up with a return to the first theme. Mr. Hime has written with effect throughout; his subjects are treated with facility and good taste, and the interest of the music never flags. Among works of its kind, this pianoforte march deserves a prominent place.

The March by Night. For the Piano. By W. H. HOLMES. London: Duff and Stewart.

A movement of the simplest character, with occasional trumpet passages and drum-rolls, suggestive, we presume, of military operations. As a piece for children it may be found interesting.

Weep Not, Grieve Not. Song. Poetry by ELEONORA E. HERVEY; the Music by BEETHOVEN. London: Duff and Stewart.

It can hardly be necessary to state that the words "music by Beethoven" in the above title simply mean that a melody of the great master has been adapted to Eleonora E. Hervey's words, with accompaniments, &c., by the adapter. Every one will recognise the beautiful theme thus made to do unwonted duty, and not a few will be glad to have it in company with appropriate and touching verses. The melody has been tenderly treated, for which reason those who object to tampering with Beethoven may approach the song without fear of receiving offence.

My Lost Darling. VIRGINIA GABRIEL. Transcription for the Piano by E. L. HIME. London: Duff and Stewart.

The melody of Miss Gabriel's song is here treated in the approved style of transcribers—that is to say, with abundant adornment of arpeggios and the like. The executive difficulty of the piece is not great; and those who possess the original may be glad to have also the transcription.

Triumphal March, for the Pianoforte. Composed by T. M. MUDIE. London: Cramer and Co.

Mr. Mudie is one of our most sterling musicians, for which reason we welcome all that comes from his pen. The march before us is worthy the earlier achievements of its composer. It opens with a spirited yet graceful Tempo di Marcia in B flat major; after which comes a charming episode in the sub-dominant key. The first movement is then resumed, and an appropriate coda ends the work. We approve Mr. Mudie's Triumphal March without reserve.

THE REV. DR. OCTAVIUS WINSLOW, who has been for many years an eminent Dissenting minister at Brighton and elsewhere, was ordained priest on Sunday morning by the Bishop of Chichester.

MORE RAILWAY COLLISIONS.—Last Saturday no less than three railway collisions took place near Manchester, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, all more or less attributable to a dense fog prevailing. The first occurred at Stone Clough, five miles from Manchester, where the 11.45 train from Manchester to Southport ran into a coal-train which was shunting at the time. The two engines met, and the shock was such as to disable both and kill one of the drivers. Several passengers sustained personal injuries, and were a good deal shaken, but it is believed none were seriously hurt. The same morning the 10.55 express-train from Southport to Manchester ran into a coal-train at Wigan. We hear of no loss of life, but some of the passengers were more or less hurt. At Ashton during the same morning a London and North-Western express-train came into collision with a Lancashire and Yorkshire goods-train. There were no lives lost, but we have no particulars as to what personal injuries may have been sustained.

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER, SKOWN & WAT FOR A WIS BREAK OF IT.





THE FIRST KISS UNDER THE MISTLETOE.—(DRAWN BY H. D. FRISTON.)

THE FIRST KISS UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

And there lies a world of wondering conjecture in the sight of that soft, rosy little creature, that animated bundle of undeveloped affections, now brought in to be solemnly caressed beneath the mystic branch! In five years' time there will be a sweet, pettish consciousness of kissing; a charming nestling of the little curly head against loved bosoms; a bright, frank, confident return of the sounding salute to those who are best loved. Yet another five years, and there will be visible the awakening coyness of maiden modesty with regard to the too abrupt advances of youthful admirers—"boys from Tom's school;" and in another five, the mystery of the heart's history will begin its opening chapter, not to be concluded until the end of the third volume, when, let us hope, "they will marry and be happy ever afterwards." May the blossoming years bear no trace less innocent than this first solemn inauguration of the Christmas bough, in its dedication to youth and beauty!

THE LOUNGER.

JOHN BUNYAN says, in his quaint way,

"The Christian man is never wholly at his ease;
For when one trouble doth him leave, another doth him seize."

And this is true; not, though, alone of Christians, but of all men and of all nations of men. Just as Parliament was about to break up we had our Belgian difficulty, which, however, we speedily got quit of. Then, quite lately, the Russian trouble came, which we have not yet done with; and now comes the Luxembourg annoyance. And, pray, where is Luxembourg? and how came England to have anything to do with Luxembourg? Thousands, I venture to say, have asked these questions during the last ten days; and, supposing that some of my readers may be ignorant on these matters, I will, to the best of my ability, answer these queries.

Luxembourg is a small territory, bounded by Germany on the east, Belgium on the west, France on the south, whilst on the north Belgium and Germany meet. The size of Luxembourg is about half that of Essex, and the same may be said of the population, which, by my "Gazetteer," is about 160,000; whereas that of Essex is about 350,000. But the wealth of Essex is, I should say, three times that of Luxembourg. Luxembourg is a Grand Duchy, and the King of Holland is its Grand Duke. It is connected with Holland only as Hanover was with England before Queen Victoria ascended the throne of these realms. From the death of Queen Anne our Kings were successively Electors, until 1815, and after that date Kings, of Hanover. But Salic law ruled in Hanover; and so, when William IV. died, the crown of Hanover went to Ernest, Duke of Cumberland; and thus, as was said, we got rid of two nuisances at once. Now there is no King of Hanover, Prussia having seized Hanover and made it a member of the new German Confederation.

This is the answer to the first question. Now for the second:—"How came England to have anything to do with Luxembourg?" The tale is soon told. In 1815, Napoleon having been safely mowed up in St. Helena, a Congress of notabilities representing the great Powers assembled at Vienna to reconstruct Europe, or, as some said, to divide the spoil. Amongst other wonderful things which they did, they gave Flanders, or that part of it which we now call Belgium, to Holland, and Luxembourg to the King, constituting him Archduke thereof, and Luxembourg a member of the German Confederation; and, what is more to our purpose, the great Powers, including England, guaranteed by treaty his safe possession both of Belgium and his archduchy. It was an ill-sorted union, this wedding Belgium to Holland. No sensible man could at the time have imagined that it could last long. Nor did it. In 1830 there was a revolution in France, and Charles X. had to fly the country. Seeing this, it occurred to the Belgians that they could get rid of their King; and straightway, with no great trouble, they got rid of him. But, my readers may say, the great Powers by the Treaty of Vienna having guaranteed to the King of Holland the safe possession of Belgium, did they not now come to his help? No, they did not. On the contrary, a congress of the representatives of the great Powers assembled in London acknowledged the independence of Belgium; and, when the King of Holland insisted upon retaining the fortified town of Antwerp, a French army besieged it, took it, and handed it over to Belgium; and, further, after much delay and discussion, the great Powers split the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg into two pieces, and gave one to Belgium; guaranteeing, though, by a treaty settled and signed in 1839, the other half to the Archduke. And now, one arrangement more must be noticed, and then we must leap forward to 1867. The archduchy was, as I have said, a member of the old German Confederation, and therefore the fortress of Luxembourg city, one of the strongest in Europe, was to be occupied by the troops of the King of Prussia, the head of said Confederation.

In 1867 this happened. France, alleging that, as the old German Confederation had ceased to exist, Prussia had no right to garrison the fortress of Luxembourg, offered to buy the archduchy of the Archduke, and the Archduke had actually agreed to the sale. But here Prussia steps in with a veto. Whereupon the Archduke (i.e., the King of Holland), seeing that the sale could not be effected quietly, withdrew his consent to sell. To this withdrawal France made no objection. But was she satisfied to let things remain as they were? By no means. The French Government alleged that, as the old German Confederation was broken up, and all Germany was united, and its military power concentrated in the hands of Prussia, the occupation of Luxembourg by Prussia would be a dangerous menace to the French frontier, and insisted, therefore, that Prussia should withdraw her garrison from Luxembourg. To this demand Prussia gave flat refusal, and war seemed to be imminent. But at this critical moment a conference was suggested, and ultimately a conference was held, and the result was another treaty, signed by the representatives of Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia, stipulating and agreeing that, under the guarantee of the said Powers, the Grand Archduchy of Luxembourg shall henceforth form a perpetually neutral State; that it shall be bound to observe the same neutrality towards all other States; and that, in conformity with these stipulations, the King of Prussia shall withdraw his troops; and, lastly, that the fortifications shall be destroyed, and that Luxembourg shall be converted into an open city.

And now what is our position in respect to this guarantee? This question Lord Derby shall answer. He, then Lord Stanley, was at the time our Foreign Secretary, and his name stands first on the list of names of those who signed the treaty. In a speech in which he defended this treaty, delivered in the House of Commons on June 14, 1867, he thus explains the guarantee:—"The guarantee now given is a collective guarantee. That is an important distinction. It means this—that in the event of a violation of neutrality, all the Powers who have signed this treaty may be called on for their collective action. No one of these Powers is liable to be called upon to act singly or separately; it is a case, so to speak, of limited liability." Thus spake Lord Stanley; and the obvious inference is, that it is scarcely possible that we can be legally called upon to defend by arms the neutrality of Luxembourg, for this reason: if the neutrality of Luxembourg should be infringed, it must be by one of the contracting Powers; and in that case collective action of all the Powers would be impossible. Lord Stanley further enforced this view with emphasis. "In such case," he said, "it (the treaty) would give a right to make war; but it would not necessarily impose the obligation."

The *Army and Navy Gazette* says that "the fortification branch of the War Office, under Sir F. Chapman and Colonel Jervoise, C.B., has been directed to make such a careful survey of the hills which inclose the great basin of the Thames in which we live that we may have a ready-made plan whereby to turn our navies on to the intrenching of a set of rough field works should the Continental fleets and Continental armies

unite to imperil our metropolis." One would suppose from this that Sir F. Chapman and Colonel Jervoise, with a staff of engineers, were about to survey the hills which inclose the great basin of the Thames. But it can hardly mean this, for the hills on the southern side of London, and, I suspect, those on the northern side also, were most accurately surveyed and mapped with a view to defensive works long ago. The maps of the country on the southern side, extending from Moreton, near Wallingford, N.W., to Maidstone on the S.E.—large maps on a scale of 6 in. to the mile, and beautifully coloured with the various configurations of the country, the roads, the woods, the houses distinctly indicated—have been lying on the table of the library of the House of Commons for two years. By-the-way, the writer in the *Army and Navy Gazette* says, "The extraordinary effect on the duration of the war produced by the fortifications of Paris has drawn the attention of all thoughtful professional men to the subject of fortifying capitals generally." No doubt. And said thoughtful men, professional or non-professional, must surely have come to the conclusion that to fortify London as Paris is fortified, would be the wildest folly. What the Government contemplate I know not; but certainly it has no thought of making London a "big Sebastopol," as the *Army and Navy Gazette* recommended. Indeed, a glance at the bird's-eye view of Sebastopol, in Mr. Kinglake's book, proves at once that the writer of this paragraph has but a very hazy notion of what Sebastopol was before it was destroyed.

I announced at the close of last Session that Sir Denis Le Marchant, the Clerk of the House of Commons, was about to resign. Subsequently I announced that he had resigned, and that Sir Thomas Erskine May, the First Clerk Assistant, would succeed Sir Denis, and hinted that probably Mr. Palgrave, the Second Clerk Assistant, would succeed Sir Thomas. I have now to announce that Mr. Palgrave has been so promoted. Who is to take Mr. Palgrave's place is not known.

THE OCCASIONAL LOUNGER.

Just permit me to mention the latest novelty in conjuring—the trick of the season, as it has been called. This is "The Wonderful Tub," just produced by the London Stereoscopic Company, which in external appearance looks like a miniature wine-barrel, and is quite empty; but with it a number of amusing tricks may be played, and a vast deal of amusement evoked. For instance, the tub may be filled with coins, keys, or other small articles; it is then wrapped up in tape and sealed; but the contents can be extracted without disturbing either tape or seals. How this is accomplished, of course, I must not explain; but full directions are sold with the toy, the price of which, complete, is 5s.

Paris is the great centre from which were wont to emanate those pretty little nicknacks for the toilet that made so prominent and pleasing a feature of Christmas gift-giving; but Paris is closed to the outer world, and it might have been thought that the supply of these articles would this year have been cut off. Not so, however; for Mr. Eugene Rimmel is still to the fore with a handsome variety of new fancy scent crammers, satchets, scent cases of diverse sorts, and other things for which he is famous. Among them is an extremely chaste statuette of the Laureate, in the pillar or pedestal of which bottles of delicious scents are inclosed. Altogether, I may say that the patrons of Mr. Rimmel will have no occasion to regret the siege of Paris, so far as being able to procure Christmas gifts of sweetness and taste is concerned.

DEAN AND SON'S JUVENILE LITERATURE.

"Juvenile Literature" is not, perhaps, a quite correct phrase; "Literature for Juveniles" would be better; but never mind, 'twill serve to convey my meaning. In juvenile literature, then, I am somewhat curious, because I always feel a lively interest in the amusement of the young folk, especially those of them still relegated to the nursery regions, and who have not yet attained to the dignity of "young gentleman" and "young lady" hood. I am pleased, consequently, when I can pick up a parcel of good books for the nursery. I did so the other day, at Messrs. Dean and Son's warehouse; and I want to say a word or two about them. These books begin at the beginning, with picture A B C's, &c.; but I don't mean to speak about them: they are much of the usual sort—"Over the land and over the sea, and how to learn your A B C," and that sort of thing. What I like best is a series of books with cosmopolitan views—"set pieces," as the theatrical people say—skeleton figures in the foreground, a stage in the middle, and scenery in the distance. When the book is opened, the figures, stage, and scenery stand out from the page; and you have the "set piece" complete. Along with these pictures there are short stories, little dramas, and so forth—all very amusing for the little ones. I may mention the titles of one or two. "From One Side to the Other," by Mrs. Fanny Cousins, gives unexpected and funny picture effects. "The Royal Punch and Judy, as played before the Queen," exhibits the whole of that ever-popular performance. "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp" reproduces the Arabian tale in brief, with actors and all complete. "Cosmopolitan Pictures" is a series of what I may call "studies from nature," which are sure to please. Along with these I have some books of "Little Plays for Little Actors," by Miss Corner, and illustrated by Harrison Weir, which, however, are meant for juveniles who have, in a sense, been emancipated from the nursery. Here we have dramatised versions, in the form of acting characters, of such old favourites as "Puss in Boots," "Whittington and his Cat," &c. A great fund of amusement for holidays and children's parties may be extracted from Miss Corner's "Little Plays," if the little actors have only ingenuity enough for the work; and I hope most of our young friends nowadays possess this requisite. If not, a little judicious "coaching" by more experienced hands will easily supply deficiencies.

ALLIANCE DRAMATIC CLUB.

The members of the Alliance Dramatic Club gave an entertainment at the Cavendish Rooms on Monday evening last. The pieces performed were "No. 1 Round the Corner," "Plot and Passion," and "Kind to a Fault." "No. 1 Round the Corner" is an excellent farce; but it requires playing quickly. When the performers persistently hum and ha, it drags dreadfully. Neither Mr. S. Wright as Flipper, nor Mr. E. H. Cuthbert as Nobbler, spoke with sufficient rapidity. Have a few more rehearsals, gentlemen, and try it again. The best played parts in "Plot and Passion" were Mr. C. Brown's M. Desmarte's, and Miss Lizzie Dudley's Madame de Fontanges. Miss Dudley's acting was highly dramatic. Mr. A. Westbrook as Henri de Neuville was too rough and rapid in his love-making; I have no other fault to find with him. Mr. Haines was the foppish Marquis de Cevennes. When the Marquis made his hurried departure from Prague, he forgot to take the stick containing the concealed paper with him; yet, when he entered Marie de Fontanges's house in Paris, he carried it in his hand. By what means did he regain possession of it? A little more care next time, Mr. Haines, if you please! "Plot and Passion," taken as a whole, was very cleverly acted; and the members of the "Alliance" may remember its performance with pride. "Kind to a Fault" I did not see. The odour of unconsumed gas was so very unpleasant that I was glad to leave; it had been escaping all the evening.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

The war critics are one and all confessing, what many of us suspected long ago, that the French inside Paris can get along upon short commons a good deal better than the Germans at first fancied. If I were not writing at a distance from books, I would quote verbatim instead of roughly a striking passage in M. Ernest Legouvé's "Histoire Morale des Femmes." After noticing the fact that even when they are working as hard as men, women require much less food, he proceeds to compare the French and Germans in the same particular, and records a case in

which the Germans proved to be entirely out in their reckoning of what his countrymen could do in the way of fighting on what a German could be semi-starvation terms. After mentioning a physiological reason for the difference between the Celt and the Teuton in this respect, M. Legouvé sums up by saying of the French, "Ils vivent de l'air"—they live on air, or they live by breathing. It is well known that (for good reasons) the lungs in women occupy, relatively to the stomach, a place somewhat different from that which they hold in men, and there is a not dissimilar difference between Celt and Saxon.

There is one thing which critics may always gracefully do at Christmas-time, which I have done before, and will now do again: I mean, offer a word of sincere regret for any errors into which I may have fallen, and particularly for any neglects or omissions. That some of these latter should take place is inevitable. One may not often be wrong in direct criticism; or, if the contrary, this is a free country, and A can correct B; but what *oversights* we reviewers must often make! How often, merely from the physical impossibility of reading everything, and the necessity of taking up topics as they arise and yet of getting a variety of them; how often must it happen that we fellows overlook good things? The late Dr. Dillon, "carpeted" before Bishop Blomfield for a gross offence, said ostentatiously (he was supposed to be a very eloquent divine), "Man is but man," and his admirers quoted it extensively as a fine speech. Let me say humbly, not ostentatiously, for self and brethren, Man is but man—even when he writes in newspapers!

THE DULL DAMSEL.

I.

THERE was once a little maid who was very stupid indeed. She always would spell reference with an *a* instead of an *e* in the last syllable, and, though she could sing and play, she never could be made to understand the difference between a major and a minor key. Neither was it safe to send her out upon an errand; for, if you told her to go to the haberdasher's and buy so many yards of blue ribbon, she would as likely as not ask the man for a pound of grapes or a packet of mignonette-seed. Then the rude persons behind the counter would laugh at her, and she would have to go home and confess that she had forgotten her message. This was very awkward.

This little maid never could do mental arithmetic, or, indeed, much arithmetic of any kind. The boys and girls would cry out after her

Multiplication is vexation,
Division is as bad;
The Rule of Three,
It puzzles me,
And Practice drives me mad.

This used to make her weep; and as she walked along the streets the cartwheels seemed to rumble out "Multiplication is vexation," and when the bells rang for a wedding they said "Di-vi-sion is as bad, bad, bad!"—which makes just eight syllables for the eight notes of the scale. They bought her an abacus, and also some marbles; and when, in a fit of absence of mind—to which she was much subject—she had swallowed one of the marbles for sweet-stuff, they procured her some beautiful white haricot beans. But, for all this, she never could count cleverly.

One morning she happened to take up a Latin vocabulary which combined instruction in natural history with the explanation of meanings; and against the word *Maggie* she saw printed the words *can count*. Of course, this only meant that the magpie could count his eggs—I mean his wife's eggs—or would know if you gave him strips of raw beef and then took one away. But this dull damsel considered it had another meaning, and that magpies could do vulgar fractions out of their own heads; and felt so envious of magpies, that she burst out crying, and said, "Oh, I wish I was a magpie!"

What consequences this had, if any, we shall soon see. Of course, I mean what important consequences, for how can there ever be a thing that has no consequences at all? Now this is a very simple question, but the little maid of whom we are speaking could not have understood it.

II.

Although the Dull Damsel was unable to do mental arithmetic, she was very pretty. A magpie is beautiful, with his black and white and green-gold plumage (of course, I do not mean when he is moulting), but he is not near so beautiful to look at as the Dull Damsel was. She had hair that fell off naturally from her forehead; and, though her chin fell back, her head was a little lifted up, as if towards a wind that was coming down from the skies, so that, as her mouth was often a little parted in the middle, she was a girl who looked as if she was longing for something, but did not know what, or even knew that she was longing. Her teeth were very nice, and her brown eyes were most wonderful, for they looked something like the eyes which you may have sometimes noticed in a dog when he is excited, or in deer, or in a person in a fever who is in no pain. What was the consequence? Why, people who did not know her would sometimes say,

"Do you want anything, you lovely creature?"

To this question the Dull Damsel at first used to answer "Yes."

But then, of course, people used to say in reply,

"What is it you want?"

And, though they used to look as if they could do anything in the world for her—and no wonder, for the Dull Damsel always looked as if it was something very great and beautiful that she wanted—she was never able to make any answer but,

"I do not know."

Of course in time some people used to laugh at a girl who was always wanting something, but never knew what she wanted; and, besides that, there are people in the world who do not know what it is to want only what is good; so one day she had to put her hood down on her face and run to her mother so fast that when she got home she could not speak for panting. Usually after that, when she was asked if she wanted anything, the Dull Damsel was silent, and sometimes she hid her face from those who asked the question.

III.

If you were to suppose from all this that the little maiden was fretful, or sad, or given to crying, you would be very wrong indeed. She was nearly always glad, and quite always sweet and good. I am sure you know what that means—there are plenty of people who are good, but they are not sweet along with it. This damsel was always sweet, and young children loved her dearly; so that if you saw her in the middle of a group of them you might almost say she was babies run to flower. Indeed, although I have called her the Dull Damsel, I might just as well have called her the Baby Virgin, for that is exactly what she was. When she was scolded for not being clever, it made no difference, except that it made her ever so much less clever than she was before; for she would still keep the same sweet, wide-open, asking face, so that, however angry you were, you could not help wanting to kiss her. Some maidens put you in mind of one flower, and some of another. This one always put you in mind of the may, white or pink—you can take your choice—sometimes one, and sometimes the other. Now, of what use would it be to scold a hawthorn-bud? Of course, a hawthorn-bud never broke a vegetable-dish and two decanters, all in one day, or lost a letter with a post-office order, or made a mistake in arithmetic. But what I mean is, that, if a hawthorn-bud did such things, you would be sure it could not help itself, and you would love it all the same afterwards.

IV.

Talking of hawthorn-buds reminds me of what took place in the May before the July to which we shall have to refer in a minute or two. It has been stated that the Dull Damsel, having read that magpies could "count," wished to be a magpie. This was a desire that she never expressed to her friends for fear they

should disapprove of it; but one day when she had been more severely scolded than usual for not doing her mental arithmetic she formed a sort of resolution to endeavour to become a magpie. For this purpose she went and asked one of her female acquaintances where the magpies all lived.

"In the woods, you goose," said the girl.
"Well, but where are the woods?" says the Dull Damsel.
"Oh, fie!" says the other girl. "You don't know geography; the woods are out in the fields."

Now the Dull Damsel had seen the fields and thought they were very pretty, but she had no idea of the way to them. However, one morning early she set out walking, and kept on walking, and walking, and walking till she came to the fields. When she had got to the fields she saw a little boy driving a market-cart. This little boy admired her beauty, and very timidly asked her if she would have a ride in his cart. So she said she would, and they rode along pleasantly for a time.

At last the market-boy was getting hungry, but the Dull Damsel sat there looking so pretty that, though she could ride in a cart, he did not feel sure she could eat, or ever wanted food. So, having taken courage after a good deal of meditation, he said to her, blushing very much,

"Do you ever eat?"
Of course she understood this question, and she smiled and said,

"Yes; sometimes, not always."
This answer very much puzzled the boy. He thought she meant that some days she went without victuals altogether, and he felt ashamed to begin his own lunch, because this might be one of the days on which she never ate anything. He was a very nice boy, but he wore an ugly smock-frock of the colour of a cabbage-leaf, with a billycock hat, and his face was very much freckled, and his hair rough, besides being, like his complexion, of a pale brick-dust colour. Knowing he was not very good-looking, he was overawed by the beauty of this maiden; but, at about one o'clock, he grew so extremely hungry that he could not help pulling out his bread and bacon and a clasp-knife.

All the while he kept bashfully looking from under his eyelids at the damsel, and he thought he saw that she looked at his lunch as if she would like some. So at last he plucked up courage, and said, in a very timid manner,

"Would you have some of my dinner, if you do please, Miss?"
He did not like to mention bacon, because she was so pretty. So the Dull Damsel had some of his lunch, and the little boy did not feel hungry, because he had fallen in love with her, as you may say.

V.

The little brick-dusty boy was very much surprised when the Damsel asked to be set down at the first wood they came to, but he did not dare to refuse her anything; though, after she had got down and gone into the wood, he stood looking after her as long as he could see her, and longer too. For he could hear her as she passed through the brakes, cracking the boughs on both sides of her, and when he could hear her no longer he burst out crying.

She had not been long in the wood before she recollected that she did not know a magpie when she saw one, so that she would not be able after all to ask to be taken into their society, and made a magpie of, and enabled to count. Still, nothing madder her, I mean no disappointment to herself alone; and so she sat down under a hawthorn bush, and listened to the singing of the birds. A great deal of the music went into her inside; for she always sang better after this day. At last she fell asleep.

When at sundown she awoke, she found the little boy sitting beside her, watching. He had been uneasy in his mind, thinking she might get bitten by an adder, or something; and so he had played truant from his work and found her out, though not without a great deal of trouble, because one tree is very much like another. Fortunately he had again got some victuals with him; though this time it was more refined, such as currant buns and sugared bread and butter; so that the damsel did not want for food; and they walked together out of the wood into the open fields, talking by the way.

In the course of the conversation the market boy asked the damsel what she went into the wood for, and she said,

"I want to be a magpie."

Now, he thought this must be a mistake, and that what she meant was that she wanted a magpie. This was a very natural error to fall into; for it was impossible for him, especially as he was in love with her, to suppose that so beautiful a girl wished to be changed into a bird that feeds on mice, and slugs, and slimy, wriggling worms; because he knew perfectly well that, though boys are made of snips and snails and puppy dog's tails, girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice. So he saw her home, and took care to remember the house; and one day early in June he climbed a tree and caught a fine young magpie, which he brought to this damsel, intending to pay his addresses to her. But as soon as ever her father discovered the attachment he was very angry, having higher views for his daughter. So the boy was forbidden the house, and the intercourse of the lovers broken off. It is very seldom in life that we marry our first loves.

VI.

After a time, the father and mother of the Dull Damsel fell into poverty, and they began to be anxious that she should make a desirable match, especially as she had lately been forming what they considered an indiscreet attachment. The only thing was that, as she appeared to be so stupid, she might make some strange mistake and spoil it all, even if everything had been arranged beforehand for her. And, besides this, nobody seemed likely to come and pay his addresses to her, the impression that she was a stupid girl having become general. This, we must admit, was very natural, for, of course, the other girls were jealous of her beauty, and used to go about saying that she had not sense enough to bait a mousetrap, and that beauty was but skin deep. I am sure that is quite deep enough; but an old proverb goes a long way, and nobody came to woo the Dull Damsel. All this while the father and mother grew poorer and poorer; and the former became so angry that he at last gave her notice that unless within a fortnight from that date she had an eligible proposal of marriage made to her, something dreadful would happen.

Every evening, when her father came home from foraging for food, he would say,

"Wife, has any one proposed for our daughter's hand?"

And every night, as the maiden lay in her bed in the next room, or in the other compartment of that room—I am not certain which—she overheard this question, and her mother's answer,

"No, husband; no one has proposed for our daughter's hand."

To this her father would invariably make answer,

"Then something dreadful will happen. Where are my razors, wife?"

Then her mother would answer,

"Husband, you forget that the fortnight's notice is not up yet."

"Are you sure, wife?" says her father; and then she overheard them counting the days on their fingers. And so the fortnight was passing rapidly by, and nobody came to propose for the hand of the Dull Damsel.

All this time, too, she appeared to be growing more and more beautiful every day.

"I believe, wife," her father used to say, "something happens to that girl in her sleep, for every morning she gets up more beautiful than she went to bed."

"Yes, husband," answers the mother, "it is certainly very odd that no gentleman is to be found who will pay his addresses to her."

"Wife!" says the husband, "I have got a bright idea. Let us advertise that she is a kind of magic girl, you know—fairies, and all that. Do you see?"

"Hah!" says the wife.

"Yes; and that she was born with a caul on, and is certain to grow more beautiful every day of her life."

"But, perhaps, they might say that marriage would change her," replies the wife.

"What made you think of that now?" says the husband, in a passion; "you are always bawling me."

And then he added, out of spite,

"To be sure, marriage has not improved *you*, wife."

"I am sure," says she, "*you* cannot talk. You call yourself a man, and yet you could not even pay the expense of the advertisement in this fine scheme of yours."

Now, the husband could not deny this, so he threw something at his wife's head, and fell into a sulky silence.

VII.

Of course the other girls were not long in discovering that the Dull Damsel got up every morning looking prettier than she had looked when she went to bed the night before. And one day, thinking that perhaps she had some secret cosmetic or drunk something wonderful out of a phial—what you call an elixir, I mean—there was a general movement for the purpose of cross-examining her, and finding out if possible what it was she did in the night in order to rise more beautiful the next day.

"Ahem!" said one of the girls to this maiden.

And ever so many girls standing round her all in a ring said "Ahem!" also. They tried to be polite and respectful, but their envy of her beauty was so extreme that they felt satirical, and thus they all said "Ahem!"

The Dull Damsel, thinking this was some new game, and not knowing what to do, said "Ahem!" also; only, as she did not feel satirical, and thought nothing about her beauty, she did not speak the word as the other girls did.

Then they all laughed at her, and one of them, who was spokesman for the rest—of course, a girl cannot be a spokesman, but you know what I mean—stepped up to the Dull Damsel and, looking at her rather impudently, said,

"So you get more beautiful than ever, Miss?"

"And more stupid than ever," answered the Dull Damsel. How she came to think of it, or to say the words, she did not know; but all the satirical girls then burst out laughing, and cried,

"There, now! At last she has said a clever thing."

This so frightened the little maiden that she began to run away as fast as her beautiful limbs would carry her—for she was beautiful from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot, and as healthy as the best-grown flower in the best garden in all the world. When you looked at her, you thought—at least, some people thought—of such things as a meadow after a June shower, or a clear running river bordered with flag-flowers, or a wood of green trees with the wind in them, or a little white skiff in the open sea. However, as we were saying, she ran home as fast as her feet would go—there was nothing prettier about her than her feet—with all the rude girls scuttling after her and mocking at her.

At last, when she was almost out of breath and very near falling down to the earth, a splendidly-dressed gentleman came up, and said, in a loud voice,

"What is all this about?" and he winked as he put the question. But this gave the Dull Damsel an opportunity of escape, and she very soon reached home. Then one of the other girls made answer to the gentleman,

"That is the Dull Damsel, and she has just said a clever thing!" And then all the satirical girls laughed together.

"Ho! ho!" says the gentleman, "I see you are satirical!"

And then he went on to ask questions, till at last he learnt all about the Dull Damsel and her beauty, and that she did not like to be asked if she wanted anything, and where she went to draw water every day for her mother, and all that. Then he gave the satirical girls some money, and took off his curious little cap, which had in it a red cock's feather, and made them a low bow all round, and went away.

"That is the politest gentleman I ever saw in all my life!" says one of the girls.

"And what a curious perfume he had in his pocket-handkerchief, or something!" says another.

"Well, now, I thought," says the youngest of them all, "it smelt like brimstone!"

Then all the other girls made game of her, and told her she knew nothing of the scents in use in fashionable society; so she had to give in (it being the custom to give in when other people do not agree with you) and confess that it might have been musk, or patchouli, or frangipanni, or millefleurs, or sweet opoponax, or eau-de-cologne. But they all agreed that it could not be lavender, because that was vulgar and not very expensive.

VIII.

Of course, the news soon reached the home of the Dull Damsel. I mean the news that she had said a clever thing. This was a great surprise to her parents; but they were exceedingly pleased about it, because they thought there would now be a better chance of some desirable suitor proposing for her hand, and thus there would be an end of their poverty.

"Husband," says the wife, as they were talking it over in a confidential way that night, "suppose our daughter was now to go on getting more and more clever, as well as more and more beautiful; why, she might marry the richest man in all the world."

"But then, wife," says he, "if her cleverness was always behind her beauty, and could never catch up with it, that would be awkward, perhaps."

"At all events," says the wife, "it would be very interesting."

"That is true," says the husband, knocking the ashes out of his pipe on to the hob; "but suppose, having now begun to be clever, she should begin to go back in her beauty, and grow uglier and uglier as she grew wittier and wittier?"

At this idea the wife was very much enraged, and took up the lamp, and went to have a look at the girl as she lay asleep in bed. Also, very early in the morning they woke her up and stared into her face to see if there was any going back in her beauty; but there was none; she was again more lovely than she had been the night before.

The next thing they did was to enter into conversation with her, in order to see if she could say anything else that was witty. So her father began upon politics and parish affairs, and her mother upon housekeeping, and morality, and dancing, and matrimony, and dress, and religion, and such like. But they could not draw her out, nor did she utter one witty remark all day long. All the friends and acquaintances were told to watch if the Dull Damsel said anything clever, but she did not. In the meanwhile the fortnight was fast drawing to an end, and, nobody having come forward as a suitor for her hand, her father was more and more resolved upon doing something dreadful.

IX.

On the very last day but one of the fortnight that her parents had given her to get courted in, the Dull Damsel went out as usual to draw water at the well, which is in a somewhat lonely spot, in the midst of beautiful scenery, so that she was always glad to go and draw water. Before she filled her pitcher on this occasion she sat down by the side of the well, with the pitcher in her hand, and was thinking about nothing in particular, when she saw the splendid gentleman with the cock's feather in his cap coming towards her. She had not seen his face on the day when she had been beset by the satirical girls; but he now drew near to her in a way which made it impossible for her not to look into his countenance. When he got close enough, he took off his cap, and, making her a very low bow indeed, said, looking into her face, which had its usual asking expression,

"Most lovely of women, do you want anything?"

Although she was frightened, and would have been very glad to get away, she felt compelled to answer,

"Yes."

And then her heart beat very fast indeed; and the splendid gentleman, stretching out a hand covered with jewellery, said,

"Do you know what you want?"

Again the Dull Damsel felt as if she could not help answering the splendid gentleman, who went on smiling to her, and bowing down to the very earth, so that the red cock's feather scraped the ground. So she said,

"No."

And still her heart beat fast and loud, and the air appeared to be thickening around her, and a choking got hold of her throat. By-the-by, I have not yet stated that her throat was particularly beautiful, but it was. While she was in this maze, the splendid gentleman seemed to be coming closer and closer, and looked ready to gather her up in his arms, while her limbs were fast failing, and her voice already gone. At last when he had got so close that in her maze she fancied he overshadowed and surrounded her, the splendid gentleman said, in a soft voice,

"I can tell you all you want."

By this time a cloud had closed over the Dull Damsel; for the beating of her heart sent a film into her eyes, and she only heard, she did not see, when the splendid gentleman said, in a voice still softer,

"I can give you all you want."

At that moment he touched her pitcher with his finger. A sudden shock ran through the Dull Damsel. She started up and fell, dropping her pitcher as she ran, and did not cease running till she was safe at home. As she had not only brought no water with her, but had not even brought her pitcher, it was very clear to her parents that she was not on the way to become clever; and, lying in bed that night, she heard her father say to her mother—

"Wife, the fortnight is up. To-morrow night I shall do something dreadful."

X.

Early next morning, a splendidly-dressed gentleman paid a visit to the cottage, and sent in half a broken pitcher and a card. On this card was written—

Undy Lever, Esq.,
Castle Gorgeous,
Faulthorpeville.

On being admitted, he bowed with great politeness to the father, and stated that he had come to request leave to pay his addresses to his daughter.

"With much pleasure, my Lord Duke," said the father, who did not know the meaning of "Esq.," and considered that every person who lived in a castle must be a duke of the land.

"Oh, certainly, your Royal Highness!" says the mother, curtseying; for she was rather flustered in her mind.

"Wife," says the father, "go and bring our daughter here."

"That I will," says she, and makes for the little bed-room of the Dull Damsel; only, though I call it a bed-room, it was just like a cupboard, except that it had a window to it, opening almost flush upon the street.

"Come here, my dear, to your fond father," says she, as she opened the door. But, to her great surprise, there was no one to be found in the room. The truth is that the Dull Damsel had overheard every word of this conversation; and, knowing the voice of this splendid gentleman, had opened the window, stepped into the street, and fled, carrying with her a concertina—an instrument on which, though I have not before mentioned the circumstance, she could play with great beauty. In fact, at Christmas time, her parents used to send her out to perform Christmas carols on it, singing them as well, as there is always plenty of money to be made at Christmas by singing and playing in the streets.

XI.

Now, the Dull Damsel was so far from being clever that, after she had gone a short way from her father's cottage, she fancied she had been travelling for a long distance, and, as she felt hungry, resolved to take up her station in the street somewhere and perform on the concertina, just as her father used to make her do at Christmas. She did not even know that a Christmas carol was inappropriate in the height of summer (for it was in July that all this took place), so she began a prelude, and the people soon gathered round her, especially the children, all of them wondering at her beauty. But the splendid gentleman, who was the cleverest man in all the whole world, had been upon her track, assisted by her father and mother, and was now within a few steps of where she stood. Still she went on preluding away as innocent as a lamb, when, all of a sudden, she hears her father's voice and her mother's voice, and they say, in a coaxing way,

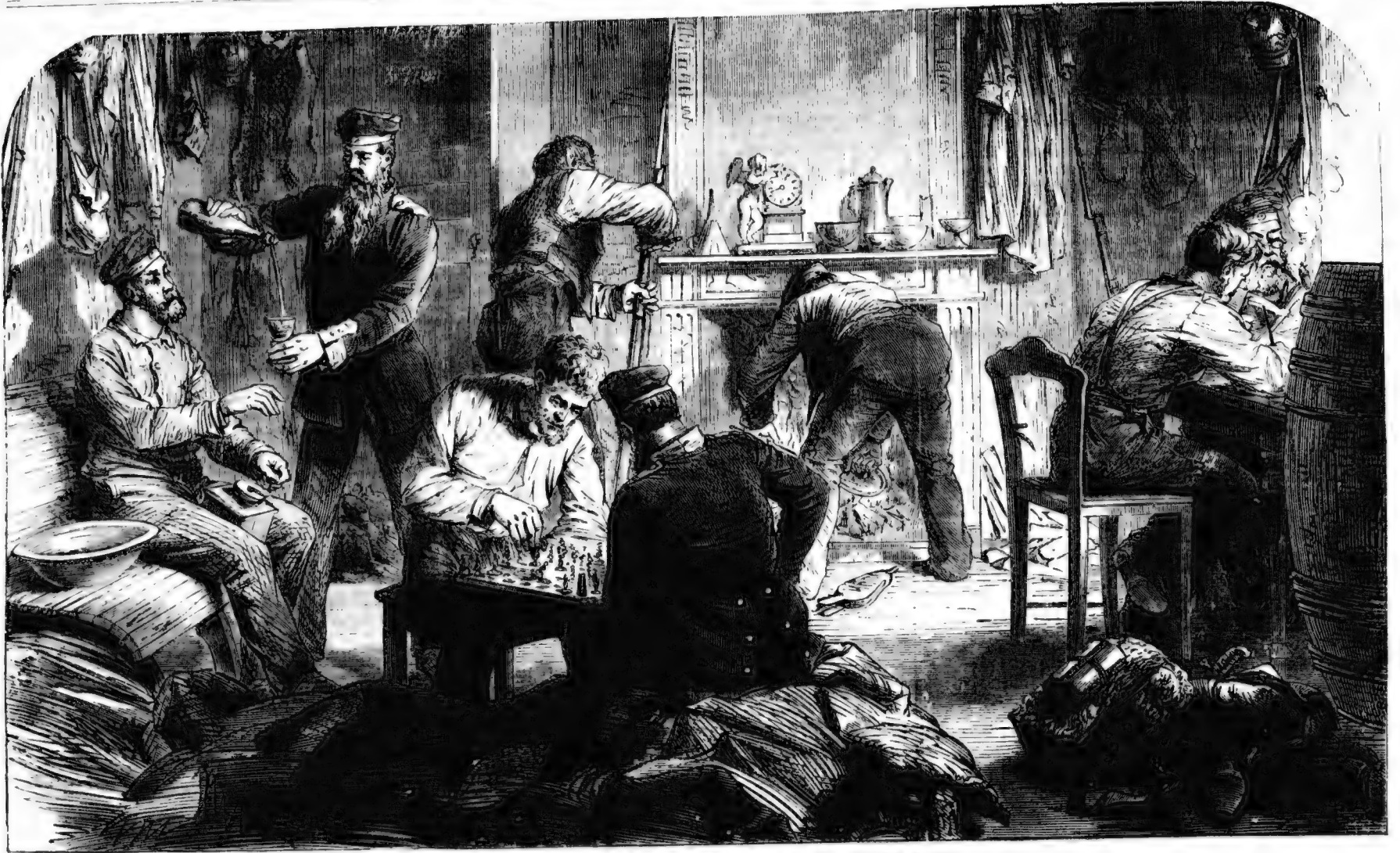
"My dear!"

And at the same moment up comes the splendid gentleman, and is going to lay his hand upon her shoulder and bear her off, in order that, with the sanction of her parents, he may make a proposal for her hand. But now we must be prepared for startling occurrences; for just at the very nick of time, as you may say, the Dull Damsel, who does not see him or hear him (for he had a most stealthy way with him), commences to sing a Christmas carol in a very sweet voice. Then all the people were very much surprised. For, all of a sudden, strange as it may appear to some, the splendid gentleman was gone, the money which he had been artfully giving to her parents burnt holes in their pockets and fell on to the pavement with a clink, and there was such a strong smell of sulphur in the air that they all had to move to another spot immediately. What followed was not less remarkable; for it happened that a professor of much eminence, passing at the time, was so struck with the occurrence, and with the musical talents of the Dull Damsel, that he immediately engaged her for his concerts at a high salary; and so she and her parents lived happy ever after, for they were both very sorry for their wickedness, and now treated her properly.

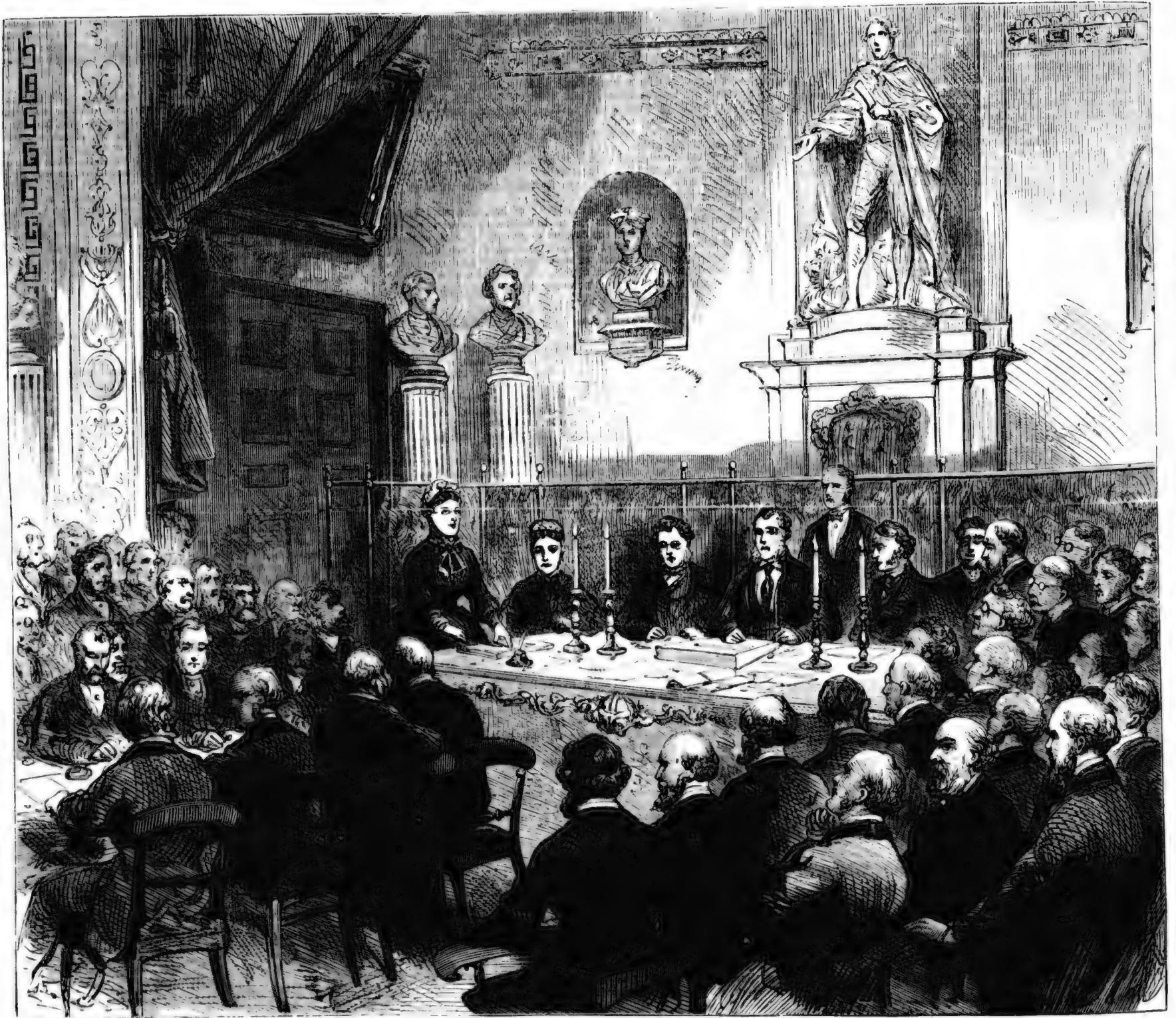
There is not much more that can now be related of the Dull Damsel; but what little there is must be considered of the utmost importance. It appears that when her parents considered it possible that if she became clever, her cleverness might never catch up with her beauty, they were quite mistaken. I do not pretend to explain these remarkable occurrences; but at last the loveliness of the Dull Damsel became so great that it came to a dead stop. At first some fears were entertained that she might now begin to go backwards till she became plain; but the simple truth is that she had now reached a point of beauty at which it was impossible for her to grow more beautiful; so the goodness, or whatever it was that she had inside her, began to turn to cleverness; and the consequence was that she became not only the most beautiful, but the most wise also; and as to what else happened to her afterwards, we must ask her when we get to heaven, for we should never be able to understand it all down here.

W. B. RANDES.

DANGEROUS TRADES IN LONDON.—At the last meeting of the Clerkenwell Vestry Mr. E. D. Johnson stated that there was a large manufactory in the parish of the same description as that where the terrible explosion at Birmingham occurred. Not only were cartridges made, but they were loaded as well; and several hundred hands were employed in the work. Without the slightest desire to hamper trade, he thought it the duty of the vestry to take some steps in the matter, as, in case of accidents, hundreds of lives would be sacrificed; and therefore he moved that a letter be addressed to the district superintendent of police calling his attention to the fact that a cartridge manufactory existed in the district, and asking the interference of the police in seeing that the Act of Parliament with reference to dangerous trades is properly regarded. In the course of the subsequent discussion, Mr. G. Brooke said that, in addition to the manufactory to which Mr. Johnson had referred, two or three hundred boys and girls were engaged in the same dangerous trade in another part of the parish. Other speakers pointed out that the large number of persons engaged in these factories indicated that there must be a great quantity of powder on the premises, if, as was stated, the cartridges were not only made, but filled. Some of the vestrymen expressed a doubt whether the process of filling the cases with powder was carried on in the manufactory mentioned; but this was met with the positive statement that not only cartridge-loading was carried on, but that percussion-caps were manufactured on the premises. Thereupon the vestry agreed to request an official inquiry on the part of the police authorities.



THE WAR: GERMAN SOLDIERS IN CANTONMENTS BEFORE PARIS.



FIRST MEETING OF THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.—(SEE SUPPLEMENT, PAGE 423.)

IMPORTANT TO INTENDING

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Taking advantage of the disturbed state of the markets on the continent, I have bought the largest and most important stock of Rich PLAIN and FANCY SILKS yet imported, at prices that are greatly to the advantage of all purchasers. As all classes of silks are so much in demand, and consequently much dearer, in the spring, I would specially advise an early inspection, when this is not convenient, Patterns will be forwarded on receipt of a description of the style of silks wished for. The following quotations represent the most desirable portions of the purchase.

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THE STOCK OF PLAIN SILK

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200 PIECES of LYONS GLACES, very bright, and specially adapted for Evening Wear. Sixty shades to select from. 22 1/2s. 6d. and 2s. 6d. the Dress, 14 yards.

200 PIECES of RICH GROS GRAINS (splendid value), at the following prices, which are quoted by the yard, of which any length will be cut.
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Special sale of over 200 Pieces, in every variety of design and colour, suitable for Dinner, Evening, or Summer Wear, at 3d. to 1d. per yard. Patterns free.

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NOW READY, SPECIAL NOVELTIES FOR LADIES' RICH WINTER DRESSES. Velvet, Silk, Poplin, in thirty shades. Drap de Dames, Terry Silk Poplin, Popeline de Soies (Silk), Drap d'Italie, &c. A grand Collection of Patterns, 25s. to 35s. the Dress.

IN BLACK, WHITE, and ALL COLOURS. VELVET-VELVETEENS. Very Rich, specially adapted for Ladies' Costumes, Jackets, &c. Patterns free. From 2s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. per yard.

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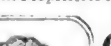
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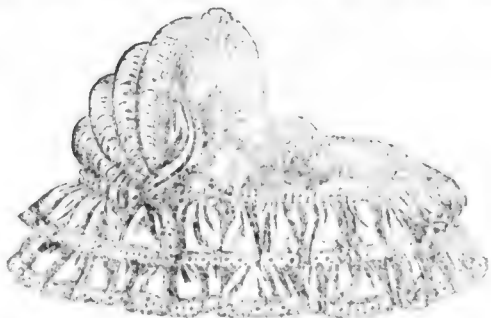
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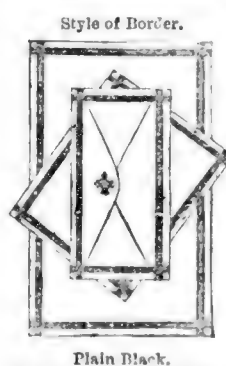
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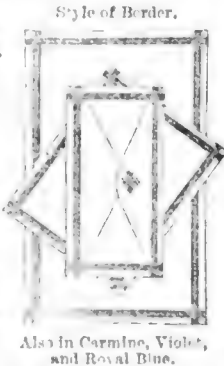


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EPPS'S COCOA.

BREAKFAST.

CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT
ILLUSTRATED TIMES

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1870.



CHRISTMAS MORNING. (DRAWN BY A. BLADIN.)

CHRISTMAS MORNING.

It may be conceded even by the most indifferent observer of Christmas that there are associations connected with the great festival which are still effectual in bringing people together, and even of promoting that kindly intercourse between classes which is in itself a recognition of human relations, and does not leave us as different beings, bound on quite different journeys without any common ending. In London and other large towns this friendly greeting is less usual than in some country districts, where the whole population of the village is known to the landowner or the squire, but it has its definite value everywhere, and not alone in the sweet sequestered solitude of the country lane leading to the church all decorated with ivy and holly, and standing pure white under its light covering of Christmas frost, but in many a lane and by-street of great, sordid, striving cities a blithe greeting and a hearty word is the best cordial with which to inaugurate Christmas morning.

ONE CHRISTMAS EVE.

Let me tell you what happened to me one Christmas Eve some years ago.

There is no use in attempting to deny what one feels to be a fact; so I may as well own at once that I was extremely fond of money. I hardly know why. I had little taste for splendour or luxury, and I think I had a contempt for misers; but I was always longing for fresh opportunities of making money. These were scanty enough; for I was a clerk in the Stamp Office. Six months before I had met Edith Morton, and I had been uncomfortable ever since. She came to town to stay with some cousins of mine, and weeks went by, and she stayed on. I saw her constantly, and when she left London it seemed to me that life had grown too dull to live. I went off to Scarborough for my autumn holiday; but the place was intolerable. I could only think of Edith, and wish she would come to Scarborough. And now on this Christmas Eve of which I am writing, I was on my way down into Gloucestershire, to spend Christmas with an old aunt—about the dullest house I could have chosen for such a season; but I had made up my mind to see Edith in her own home, and if I thought I had any chance with the parents to get her promise to be my wife. I had made myself pretty sure of Edith's feelings before she left London. Her father was clergyman of the parish in which my aunt lived. It was true Christmas weather; a sharp, clear, crisp frost, bracing and cheerful enough as long as you kept on walking, but unbearably cold after an hour or so of journey.

We stopped a most unconscionable time at Reading. It seemed to me that the carriage-door was opened and shut most needlessly, and each time the cold air came rushing in as if it wanted a warm, and took it out of the only human being in the carriage. I was going first-class because of the cold. Hitherto I had not had a fellow-traveller; but the door, which I had hoped was finally shut, opened again, and a porter pushed in a huge fur cloak, and then stood waiting.

"Shut the door," I said; "the cold is enough to cut one in two."

"Directly, Sir."

The porter had a fee'd way with him, and the fur cloak showed that I was going to have a well-to-do companion.

"That is one advantage of money," I thought; "it makes every one respect you; poor people are sure to get snubbed by inferiors—let them be who they will. I wish Edith's father were a landed proprietor instead of a country parson. I love Edith for her own sake; money would not alter my feelings towards her; but it would be much better on all accounts if she had a little money of her own; there is nothing like money."

I have never forgotten saying these words to myself. A colder chill than ever crept over me as I ended.

"Come, I say, porter, do look sharp! this is intolerable."

"All right, Sir. Now, Ma'am, if you please."

It was really lucky he said "Ma'am," or I should not have guessed what the bundle was that rolled into the carriage. It might have been a mummy, or a bale of goods, or a Russian bear; it was a tall bundle of fur, and it groaned and wheezed like machinery in want of oil. The porter had shut the door, but a hand, ungloved, and covered with rings, protruded out of the bundle, and pointed to the closed window. I let the sash down.

"Martha—Martha," in a weak woman's voice; "Porter, tell my maid to come here."

A tall well-dressed woman came to the window.

"Martha, are you travelling in the same carriage with Waters and Samuel?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"And have I my smelling-salts?"

"No, Ma'am."

The maid moved away with stately steps, and came back presently with a small case in her hand.

"You can keep it," said the weak voice. "I only want to smell it."

The maid opened the case, and the light flashed on a bottle set in gold and jewels. I could not make it out distinctly in that brief minute, but it seemed to me like a glimpse of Aladdin's cave. No doubt she's some Indian begum, or the widow of a City millionaire. Somehow, I did not feel angry with this protracted admission of cold air.

"That will do; and, Martha, be sure you go in the same carriage with the men-servants, and come to the carriage-window whenever we stop, and see if I want you."

I smiled. It seemed to me that the lady wished me to know that, though she chose to travel alone, she was well protected. I drew up the window with much deference, and then I looked across at my companion. She had unfasted some of her wraps, and her face was visible. Not so old as I expected—about sixty-five, I fancy—with a genial, pleasant expression, but unhealthy-looking. She tried to draw the fur-lined cloak across her, and I ventured to help her. How splendidly deep and soft the fur was! Why, that cloak itself was a moderate year's income.

"Thank you!"

Decidedly her voice was not unpleasant, though so weak, and her smile was most reassuring. Money has not made her assuming or disagreeable. If I could only be rich I am sure I should be quite happy. I hazarded a remark about the intense cold, and she answered graciously. She told me she had to go some distance, and had therefore taken extra precautions against the weather.

"But it is nothing for people like ourselves." Really her smile had quite a friendly warmth in it. "Think of the poor, and even those not quite poor, who can only travel second-class without much warm wrapping. It is really dreadful." She gave a little shiver, and nestled into the heap of fur, in which, it seemed to me, she must feel like a dormouse in his winter nest.

"What a sweet, tender-hearted woman! Money has neither made her proud nor selfish. If Edith were only a rich woman, how happy we might be." I sighed deeply, and closed my eyes. I opened them again to see if my companion had gone to sleep. No; she was looking at me with that soft but intense compassion which only a woman's eyes can express, and which, moreover, would only be endurable from a woman. I hardly remember what I said next. I found we were bound for the same place, and that my new friend owned all the property round Mr. Morton's parish. I asked if she knew my aunt; but she said ill-health had kept her a constant absentee. She had lived almost constantly in the south of France, but she was now going to try an English Christmas at Newland Court.

"How gladly you will be welcomed!" I felt a sudden envy of the nephews and nieces who would greedily crowd round this rich relative and prey upon her gentleness, without appreciating her as I, a stranger, had already done. She shook her head.

"I was left very young without parents, and I have no near relative"—she paused. I saw her lips tremble, and I suppose

my sympathy betrayed itself. "If I speak truth, I found more companionship in my foreign home than I am likely to do in Gloucestershire."

She spoke sadly, as if she thought that, at her age, with her unattractive person, she could not hope to win friendship.

"In England, even if a person has no other claims to consideration, wealth and a well-appointed, luxurious home will always bring society round him." I laughed, rather bitterly.

She smiled. "You are very cynical for your age, I think."

I longed to tell her my whole story, but I refrained. Somehow, I could not bring myself to speak of Edith. Besides, although I knew that I had won her heart, and had made her understand the depth of my own attachment, I was not really engaged to Edith Morton. So I had no actual right to speak of her to a stranger. I said I had found life a hard, uphill battle; and then spoke about this Christmas visit to my aunt.

"Not a very lively companion for you," she smiled, and I fancied, looked impatient for my answer.

"No."

"Do you think"—she hesitated, and her weak voice got suddenly sharp. "Is it a very un-English proceeding to invite you and your aunt to come and cheer my lonely Christmas Day? You must forgive me if it is; you see I have been so long away from home."

I was rather startled, as one is startled by incongruity: not by the invitation, that seemed to me to spring naturally from our conversation, but by the suggestion that my new friend was un-English or likely to do anything unconventional—the whole atmosphere of her surroundings had seemed to me substantially English. I knew she was just the sort of person my aunt Anna would worship. I accepted the invitation in a flutter of delight. Next to having money, it was best to know rich people; and to spend Christmas with the squires of Newland instead of in Aunt Anna's quaint, prim little parlour was something almost too good to believe in.

Lights, a station, and a stoppage. I could not have thought we were so soon arrived, but "Newland—anyone for Newland?" was being shouted from one end of the long narrow platform to the other. I helped my fellow-traveller out and placed her in the waiting-room. "I'll see about your carriage," I said. I turned and faced Mrs. Martha, the stately well-dressed maid.

"Thank you, Sir"—the maid had a loftier manner than her mistress. "We won't trouble you."

But I waited, and had the satisfaction of seeing my friend, after cordially bidding me good-by, drive off in a splendid new carriage and pair, with a coachman fit for royalty and a tall footman; there was a pony-carriage besides for the maid and the butler, and a drag for the luggage. The horses and appointments seemed in the dim light all first-rate.

"I have certainly fallen on my legs this time;" and I hurried off to Aunt Anna's.

We were to beat Newland Court by five o'clock. Miss Duncan said she dined earlier on Christmas Day, for her servants' sake. "Sweet woman!" I thought as I walked over the hard, frost-covered road; "how unselfish, spite of your riches." It had occurred to me when I first settled to spend Christmas with Aunt Anna that we might possibly be asked up to the Rectory in the evening, and yet, strangely enough, I never thought of regretting this now.

"I shall see Edith as we come out of church," I longed to see her, but my heart had a twinge in it as if I did not long enough.

It was cheerful to see the tiny light of Aunt Anna's window, like a red glow-worm, at the corner of the lane which led to the village. I had only been here once before, but I knew that close by was the great chestnut avenue, nearly a mile in length, which led to Newland Court. I knew, too, that if I had gone twenty steps past my aunt's cottage I might have seen lights twinkling in the Rectory. Edith had told me how near a neighbour my aunt was. But I did not go on. I rang the bell beside my aunt's garden gate, and looked towards the dark, indistinct chestnut-trees. My aunt was expecting me. She had a hospitable meal ready.

"Call it supper or tea, whichever you like, Dick; only not dinner, you know. I don't attempt dinner in the evening."

"You are, nevertheless, asked to evening dinner to-morrow," I said. And then the bewilderment in her kind, comely face made me laugh till I had to wait for breath to explain.

"Miss Duncan! you don't say so!" and the good woman went off into some timid surmises as to whether her cap was quite the "sort of thing" for Newland Court. I reassured her.

"Miss Duncan is the gentlest, simplest woman I have seen this long while. She will be charmed with you, Aunt Anna."

II.

Next morning the snow fell so fast that there was a very small congregation in the village church. I could not see Miss Duncan, and Edith Morton was not in the Rectory seat. My aunt began to praise the decorations as soon as we reached the churchyard gate.

"Are they not beautiful, Dick?"

"I never noticed them."

"Oh, Dick!" she exclaimed, "here are all the Mortons. Why, where's Edith?"

I felt awkward, as if I were in a false position, while I was being formally introduced to Edith's mother, and her sisters, and her little brothers; it seemed to me that I felt glad the boys were so little—big brothers are always in the way.

"Edith has sprained her foot," said Mrs. Morton. "We won't keep you in the snow now, Miss Lawrence; but perhaps you and your nephew will come and drink tea with us and help us with snap-dragon?"

My aunt looked at me. I longed to answer for her. I did not want Edith to hear that I had accepted Miss Duncan's invitation, but I might have trusted Aunt Anna.

"Thank you!"—there was a bridling dignity in her tone that amused me, spite of the false shame I was enduring—"but we are going to dine at the Court."

I thought Mrs. Morton looked surprised and sorry; but we all said good-by and hurried home, the snow floated down so incessantly. I was ready long before Aunt Anna appeared, and was soon in it on our way to the Court. When I got home that night I sat long over my tiny fire; how small and mean everything looked after all the comfortable luxuries yonder. And yet Aunt Anna had a nice little income, quite as much as I had at present; so that if I married Edith we must live in about the same style.

"Style!" I poked the fire so impatiently that its little life went out. "Squalor, rather."

I put my hand over my eyes, a hot flush was on my face. Miss Duncan's kindness to me had been marked. She had even consulted me and yielded to my opinion more than once. Aunt Anna had joked me about my conquest.

"I could not marry Edith on my present income." My hand came more over my face. "We must of necessity wait several years." Here I paused, as if I were afraid of my next idea; but it came out boldly soon. I had drunk more wine than usual; I did not feel timid. "Why not marry Miss Duncan; she is older than I thought—she looks nearly seventy without her bonnet, and she has weak health, but I like her, I can make her happy, and give her the companionship for which she craves; and then I can some day make Edith rich and happy too."

I got hot and angry with the shame that oppressed me at my treachery. I seemed to hear a whisper.

"Will Edith keep faith if you break faith?"

"I am breaking no plighted. I will act in a strictly open and honourable manner. I have not seen Edith, and I will not see her, except when others are present. Even then, I will not by any word or look remind her of our past intimacy. Why, how absurd I am! Girls are such flirts, that I daresay she has long ago thrown me over for some Curate or other."

III.

Next day I called at the Court, but not at the Rectory. And after this, there was, somehow, always some message passing between my aunt and Miss Duncan, or something which required my presence at Newland Court. At last came a note from Mrs. Morton asking us to dine at the Rectory. We went. It seemed to me that Edith was altered—paler, thinner, older—not at all the bright, charming girl I had been dreaming of all these months. She was very quiet and timid, too; and she had been always sprightly in my eyes. Only when I held her hand an instant, as I said "Good-night!" she gave me one long, wistful look that went to my heart like fire.

"You are ill?" I said, quickly. The others were all clustered round Aunt Anna.

Edith smiled, and then her lips trembled so that I felt sure she was going to cry. I hate women to cry—at least, I did in those days. I let her hand drop out of mine.

"I'm not ill (she forced the smile back), but I suppose I get weak and dull because I have to keep indoors. I am lame still."

I felt shocked at my own indifference, and I began to apologise for not having made inquiry for her—

"Oh, no; it is nothing, only I had so looked forward to this Christmas; don't you think when one looks forward one is sure of disappointment?"

"I don't know."

What on earth could Aunt Anna be gossiping about all this while? but she came to my rescue.

"I say, Dick, are you not ready? I shall tell tales of you to-morrow," and then she looked at Mrs. Morton as if she would understand. It seemed to me that Edith's mother was looking very sadly at her daughter.

IV.

In February I was married to Miss Duncan, and I was master of Newland Court. We were married at the parish church, with only my aunt and my two London cousins for bride-maids. All the village came to see us married, but I only saw one face—Edith, so white and thin, and with such dark circles round her eyes that I hardly knew her. She grew flushed by the end of the service, and she was in the porch as we passed up the church, with a lovely nosegay of Christmas roses in her hand for my wife—yes, my wife. Till I saw those two standing side by side I had gone on in wilful blindness; I had not realised what I was doing. I looked in my wife's face as she stood with the full morning light on it. She had dressed herself to look as young as possible, and it seemed to me she was downright ugly. I shuddered, I almost loathed her as I handed her into my carriage—mine—she had made me absolute master of all her possessions. On that day—the day which I had counted on for my own happiness and hers—I did not know an instant's peace. My wife worshipped me, and her love was my punishment. I sat and looked at her, I almost cursed her, the dog to which I was tied for ever, and wondered how I should get free. If she had not been most gentle and most amiable, I might, perhaps, have been tempted to leave her on our wedding day. This feeling grew. I had sworn to love and cherish her; I had said I would make this woman's life happy; I did not know that a woman must be made happy in her own way; that unless her husband gives her the love she craves for, he might as well beat or starve her. Once my wife tried remonstrance quietly, but with dignity. I grew angry, and threatened to leave her; I went so far as to tell her that few young husbands would lead the home life I did. She shamed me by her meekness: she offered to travel, though she was in ill-health; and we went abroad. At first it was a relief to be away from Newland. I had learned to hate the sight of Edith's pale face; she had never been well since that Christmas, people said; but I soon found that change could do little for me. One morning (we had been away some time) my wife gave me a letter. I opened it and saw it was from Edith, but I did not notice that the envelope had a deep black border. Edith bade me good-by. "I am dying," she said; "and I must die soon, they say; so I may tell you how I have always loved you—always prayed for your happiness; once I used to pray for my own with you, but I could not have made you happy, Richard. Everyone has some special need in life, and yours was money, and you have it." Then she blessed me and said good-by without a word of reproach for the blight I had cast on her life.

"I must go back to Newland at once." My wife was standing by me, looking in my face with a strange, cold expression. How repulsive she seemed to me!

"It is useless, Richard. Edith Morton died a week ago. Your letter came in one from her mother to me."

I don't know what I said. I gave way to a burst of grief and self-reproach. My wife's hard, un pitying face was maddening me.

"You lag," I said, "you knew I loved Edith, and yet you tempted me on to marry you."

She laughed so loud, so sneeringly, that I grasped her shoulders and shook her in my passion. She seemed changed into a fiend.

"Take care!" she said. "There is law to protect an old woman as well as a young one. As long as I was afraid of Edith, I could be patient. Now you will find a change in me; and my doctors tell me my life is a good one, so we may yet be companions for twenty years," and she laughed. "Take my advice, and have my friendship while you can."

Her face nearly touched mine, and she was smiling at my despair. I grasped her throat and held it tight, and then I was suddenly thrown off and darkness came between us.

V.

I was in a railway carriage. Opposite me was a mass of furs and cloaks, and some one evidently asleep inside them. Where was I? I tried to clear my brain. The slackening speed showed that we were near a station. Was that my wife, and had I strangled her. I took my hat off and roused myself. Here was Newland station again, and here was the tall maid at the window.

"We shall soon reach Purley now, Ma'am," she said.

The lady in the furs roused.

"Shall we? I've had quite a long nap, Martha." She looked across at me. "You have slept too, I think; and you must have had troubled dreams?"

"Who is that lady with the three servants?" I said to one of the porters at Newland.

"Mrs. Beaumont, the wife of the member for Purley. Poor old lady! she had to go to London on account of a sick grandchild. She's a lady who'll be wanted home at Christmas time."

There is no use in saying how I felt when I saw the light twinkling in Aunt Anna's window. I stood still, wondering which was the dream and which the reality. The dear old woman joked me about my dulness.

"I had an idea you would not find Newland dull," she said, slyly. "I hope you won't dislike spending to-morrow evening with the Mortons."

I could hardly smile, I felt so like a criminal. On my knees that night I thanked God for the warning that had been sent me. Edith has told me since that my manner puzzled her when we met. I seemed, she said, almost shy with her. I should think I did. I felt so horribly unworthy that I wondered whether I had a right to ask for her love; but by the end of the evening my scruples had vanished. The children wanted a screen out of the Rector's study to help in their charades, and I offered to find it with Edith. I believe we kept the children waiting most unconscionably; but we made each other very happy.

Whenever my old money longings came back—they are very rare now—I have only to look at my wife's sweet, bright face, and to think of the pale Edith Morton, with her bunch of Christmas roses in the church porch. We shall never be rich folk; but few people were ever so happy.

K. S. M.

A CHRISTMAS DINNER IN THE OLDEN TIME.

"The Fine Old English Gentleman" who, though he feasted the great, yet ne'er forgot the small, has few representatives in modern times. We are too apt to let charitable institutions do our benevolent offices for us, and to ease our conscience, even at Christmastide, by the gift of a soup-ticket, ever to feel the full luxury of feeding the hungry, except by deputy. Indeed, it would be difficult to do our alms effectually in any other way; but it would be well if we gave ourselves a little more personal interest in every beneficent movement and took some part in the work after the appearance of our names in subscription lists. The gathering of a circle of our poorer neighbours round a table well supplied with pudding and sirloin, and garnished with chine and tankard, may only be effected even once a year by an extensive organisation, where they shall be more the guests of the public than our own; but we may make them our own by loving ministrations to their needs, and by our cheerful presence in their midst, and so fulfil the law which Christmastide is kept to celebrate.

THE CLEVER BABY:

AND HOW HE BOTHERED THE FAIRIES.

It is generally supposed that all the fairies left the earth shortly after that Golden Age called by historians "Once Upon a Time," and that the reason why nowadays we never see any of the real "Good People" (for, of course, the absurd little children with large heads in pantomimes don't count) and never hear of their helping poor but virtuous cobblers, or changing babies, or otherwise making themselves useful or troublesome, is simply that there are none.

Now, this is a great mistake; if there were no fairies nowadays, where do you suppose Mr. Doyle and Mr. Tenniel would get their portraits from? and who do you think could make all the new fairy tales, which, of course, must happen before they are written down? No; there are plenty of elves, and imps, and brownies still alive—only the fact is that the poor little things are so frightened by the whirl and bustle of machinery, and the number of schoolmasters who are so much abroad, and the general cleverness of everything and everybody, that they daren't show their heads for fear of being caught and bottled, and—horrible fate!—perhaps even lectured upon!

But it must be confessed that the fairies now in the world are neither so numerous nor so frolicsome as they were in the Golden Age before spoken of. Indeed, it is only the biggest and bravest of them that remain here; all the others have flown away to the Moon, where, of course, it is moonlight all day long, so that they can dance and make fairy rings all over the place, as much as ever they like, without having to wait till everybody has gone to bed; and every year fresh bands of fairies fly away, as their territories are invaded by new railways and steam-boats, and their beautiful woods cut down to be made into gun-stocks.

This state of things is becoming serious; and one moonlight night last month the fairies left in London and the neighbourhood held a meeting on Hampstead-heath, to consider what was to be done to prevent every elf, brownie, bogart, fay, pixie, merrow, cluricaune, and shefro (the three last are Irish gentlemen) from becoming a lunatic—as the inhabitants of the Moon are called—out of sheer disgust.

A distinguished Elf first addressed the meeting. "Look here," said he—for fairies' speeches are of a very free-and-easy kind, and never begin, "Your Royal Highness, my Lords, and Gentlemen"—"this is getting too bad. For the last three months I've had next to nothing to do."

"Can't you help any children?" said a pretty little Fay, with big brown eyes, sitting curled up on a large mushroom.

"They don't believe in us now," sighed the Elf; "and you can't help people that don't believe in you. Besides, nowadays they don't want our sort of help. Only yesterday morning I saw a little boy, with a slate in his hand, looking very unhappy; so I flew to him, and peeped over his shoulder to see what was the matter."

"And what was it?" asked an inquisitive little Pixie, who had just come up from Cornwall to see how things were going on in London.

"On his slate were written these dreadful words:—

'Find the G.C.M. of 6327 2397'

"Oh!" cried all the fairies; for they are awfully ignorant, poor things, and haven't an idea beyond simple addition.

"Bedad!" remarked a Cluricaune, looking as if he were thinking the matter over; but, as he did not say any more, I suppose he gave it up.

"I couldn't help him, you know," added the Elf, mournfully; "so I flew away."

This melancholy anecdote threw a gloom over the company for some time, and nobody seemed inclined to make any more remarks. At last a long-headed Scotch Brownie suggested that it would be as well to examine the archives of their nation, and see what had been done before in time of trouble. ("Archives" is rather a formidable word, and I am not quite sure that the Brownie knew what it meant; but even fairies sometimes use long words without understanding them.)

"Yes," said the Pixie. "We haven't done anything worth speaking of for so long that we have almost forgotten what the duties of our people are. Can't anybody suggest any way of employing ourselves?"

"Bedad!" cried the Cluricaune, energetically, and they all turned to hear what he had to say, as it was evident that some great idea had struck him. If it had, however, it was only a runaway knock, for he did not finish his remark.

"There was an ancestor o' mine," began the Brownie, "a grant while ago, that wad throw an awfu' big horn at the bairns when they were—"

"Oh, dear!" said the brown-eyed Fay who had spoken before; "I'm sure that wouldn't do at all. Just think—we might hurt the little things!" (N.B. She was about three inches high herself.)

"It was me own father's grandfather," said a Fir Darrig—a warlike little Irish fairy, dressed all in red. "It was me father's grandfather that turned Diarmid Bawn the Piper into a horse—sure there's plenty we might do that to now."

"Why shoot we durn men to horses?" asked a German Kobold, who had come all the way from the Hartz mountains that evening. "Let us show to some boor man some treasure in the earth hidden."

But the Brownie objected. "Treasure trove," he argued, "belongs to the Laird o' the Manor; so that if the man was honest he wad get nothing by it."

If he was a dishonest man I need hardly say that the Good People would not think of helping him.

"Oh! what shall we do?" cried the Fay. "It must be something pretty."

"And fenny," said the Shefro.

"And useful," said the Brownie.

"And not doo much drible," said the Kobold, who was rather fat and lazy.

"Bedad!" remarked the Cluricaune again; but this time he did go on with the sentence. "Let us change a choild!"

"Oh, that would be delightful!" and the Fay almost tumbled off her mushroom, she clapped her hands so violently. "We will make him so pretty!"

"And so good!" said the Pixie.

"And so clever!" said the Brownie.

"And teach him such lots of tricks!" said the Elf.

So they all agreed that they would steal a baby for some time, and put a Fairy Changeling in its stead; and they made up their minds to take the child of a very clever man who lived in London, and who thought he knew all about how children should be educated.

"We'll show him how to bring up a baby," they cried; and they all flocked away to his house, and peeped through all the keyholes one after another, till the nursery was quite full of them.

The worst of it was that it was so long since a child had been stolen by the fairies that they didn't know anything about it—not even how old he ought to be; and this particular clever man's child was very nearly six when they determined to steal him. Now, in the old times, the baby was always changed long before it could speak.

By the side of the little bed the mother was sitting asleep; the Boy had been naughty that day, and she had come to see that he was not still sleepless and unhappy; but she found him asleep, with a tear resting on his hot cheek. She kissed it off, and sat watching her child till she, too, fell asleep, tired with a



long day's work; and even her dreams were prayers for her little one. The fairies looked at her very kindly, and the little Fay said, in a soft, hushed voice,

"We won't put an ugly changeling in its place. I will take its shape, and she shall not know the difference till we send it back, changed only for the better."

So the little Fay grew and grew till she was as large as the Boy, and she took his features and lay in his bed; only his eyelids were closed, so that she could not see what was the colour of his eyes. And the other fairies gently lifted the Boy and breathed a charm over him, so that he became like them, and could slip through keyholes and over the roofs of houses to their home. Then the mother woke and kissed the sleeping fairy and went to her own room.

Next morning the nurse came to wake the Boy, and the Fay was dreadfully frightened, because she did not know what colour her eyes ought to be; so she kept them shut, and pretended to cry and be sleepy; and the nurse got angry and scolded and shook her, till at last she began to cry in earnest, for fays are not used to rough treatment. But the mother slept in the next room, and when she heard her Boy cry she came to see what was the matter; and as she stood over the bed the Fay opened her eyes, and the soft blue of the mother's eyes was reflected in the child's, and she did not know that it was not her own Boy, but kissed it, pleased that her coming had stopped its tears. And all day the mother found her Boy so good and kind that she wondered what had come during the night to make him better; but the father said, "Confound the Boy! he's stupider than ever! Yesterday he had some ideas about Greatest Common Measure; and now he's none at all!" For this was the very boy that the Elf had wished to help; and all day the poor little fairy puzzled her head in vain about

Find the G. C. M. of 6327 2397

But now I must tell you about the real Boy, and how the fairies got on with him.

To begin at the beginning: for his breakfast they gathered all sorts of fairy fruits—for where the Good People live fruits grow all the year round; and he had wild strawberries, and blackberries, and dewberries, and nuts, and tiny little apples like crab-apples, only not sour; and lots of other things, "too numerous to mention," as the advertisements say. But though the Boy ate a great many of these—indeed, he hardly left enough for the fairies who breakfasted with him—and drank ever so many acorn-cups full of fairy wine, he didn't seem at all satisfied; and when they had all finished he got up and made the following speech:—

"I say—I'm not going to stand this. I don't know who you people are, but I suspect you're all idasuperstitions." (By this long word I suppose he meant "idle superstitions," an expression which he had often heard his father use.) "And I don't care if you ain't" (which was rude). "And I don't care about blackberries and things for breakfast. I want my bread and milk. Please may I have some?"

If he had not been polite enough to say "Please," I don't think the fairies would have paid any attention to him, for they were rather disgusted with his greediness; and an Elf who can make a very good meal off a blackberry—especially if you just give him a slice of roast chestnut to serve as meat—is hardly likely to understand the importance of a good breakfast to a "growing boy of six"—his very clever papa's favourite way of describing him—though he was really about five eleven-twelfths. As it was, however, half a dozen active little Shefroes ran off to a cow which was grazing near them, milked it (milk cows is quite in the Shefroes' line, as any Irish farmer will tell you), and—in the usual fairy period of "less than no time"—brought him the warm frothing milk, whiter than snow, and "sweet as a nut." He was so pleased with it, and so much obliged to them for taking such a lot of trouble, that he felt ashamed to ask for bread—especially as they had given him so many apples that he really didn't want it.

"Now then," said the Elf, when breakfast was at length over, "let us begin to teach him easy lessons that will make him wiser about birds and flowers and insects than any baby alive—and won't he surprise his father when he goes home!" (Of course the Elf didn't say this to the Boy, for he would have been dreadfully indignant to hear himself called a baby, though he really was one just as much as you or I.)

"I will teach him about the birdies," said the Brownie. "I ha' kenned them a', fra' the lark to the grant eagle, ever sin'—"

"Bedad!" interrupted the Cluricaune, as usual. "I'll tache him about the insecs me-self—I've lived the most of my days in a cellar, but I'll soon pick up enough to instruct the craitur." This was rather an Irish reason for setting up as a teacher of entomology; but what could you expect from a Cluricaune?

"I'll instruct him in the wather-insecs tu," murmured a quiet little Merrow, in a tender brogue which could only have come from county Clare.

"I will to him the names of stones dell," said the Kobold, who, of course, knew all about minerals, as he had always lived in the Hartz Mountains.

"And I'll tell him all about the flowers," said the Elf. "Let's set to work at once. Who shall begin?"

"I will me-self," said the Cluricaune; and they went to the Boy, who, having been left to himself, was naturally employed in pulling some of the fairy tables to pieces. (I suppose you know that mushrooms are the tables used by the good fairies; the bad ones—like the imps, and most goblins, and even some of the pixies—use toad-stools.)

"Can ye tell me hwat an insec is, me bhoys?" inquired the Cluricaune, plunging into the middle of his subject at once.

"True insects may be generally defined articulable animals, possessing six legs, two tennae, two compound eyes, a small brain at the ankeerior akemetry of a double me-ugly-ally core—I don't know any more."

The Cluricaune was so taken by surprise that he could only ejaculate "Bedad!"

"Please, this isn't my enkerology day," added the Boy; "it's botany this morning, and jollygy this afternoon."

"Is it, though?" said the Cluricaune. He did not make any more remarks, but soon after wandered away, and was heard muttering to himself at intervals, "Me-ugly-ally core—bedad!"

"Would yemind me askin' ye a question?" the Merrow inquired, humbly. He was naturally of a mild disposition, and the Boy's definition of an insect had quite subdued him.

"Course not."

"Then, ye see that ugly spalpeen wid a big head swimmin' about yander?" pointing to a tadpole in the pond by the side of which they were standing. "Iver since I come here from Oireland he's been callin' me names. He says he niver saw wan of me fam'lee before, and he doesn't want to again; and, bedad! I'd give him as good as he brings av I knew hwat fam'lee he belonged to; be the powers I would!"

"Oh! that's only one of the Batrachia in an undeveddled state—a common Rana temporaria; that's all."

"Indade now? And a moighty convanient neem for a blay-gaird like himself. I'll be ather tellin' him so tu!" and the Merrow dived down into the water, and began to call the tadpole by the most awful names. "Here, ye ugly omadhaun!" he cried. "Would ye be laughin' at the Merrows, that have lived in county Clare before yer ould ancestors was thought of? I know yer fam'lee an' yer belongins tu. Ye're only a common Rany Tipperary, after all! One of the Batrachy tu. Pho! I disjoise ye!"

The tadpole was so frightened at being called a Rana temporaria that he swam away, and did not say anything to anybody till he had become a grown-up frog.

But the Elf thought it was time to begin his lessons in botany; and he said to himself, "The Boy can't know anything about our pretty wild-flowers; there at least I can teach him something." So he took off his fairy cap, which was one of the purple bells of the foxglove, and asked him if he knew its name.

"It's a—it's a Diggletails purpurea," answered the Boy, with an effort, for he could hardly manage these long words yet—and, indeed, generally pronounced them wrong.

"Ach himmel!" cried the Kobold. "Yet for a wonderful boy! He has an ugly name for everything!"

The poor Elf was rather crestfallen at this, but he thought he would try again. Close by them was a large clump of mallow, its mauve flowers growing in clusters of three or four over the bank. He plucked one, and asked the Boy its name.

"Oh! that's a—a—I think it's a Calystagesser sepium"—which was a bad shot at the Latin name of the bindweed; but the fairies didn't know any better, and it completely shut the Elf up for the rest of the day.

They now asked the Brownie to put some questions to him on ornithology (not that they used such a long word as that—they simply said birds; but I think it is as well to show that you know some words of five syllables as well as other people). But the cautious Brownie said he didna like to. "What for should I?" he asked. "I dinna ken the heathen names o' the birdies, and he'll come wi' his claismaclaverin' words, and mak' me think that the wee pretty thing I ha'e always kenned as a mavis is a Diggletails Timmerare, or some such-like abominetion."

However, the Kobold said he would make one more trial of the child's overwhelming knowledge; and, picking up an odd-looking stone which lay at his feet, asked him its name.

"I know," the Boy promptly replied. "It's an *Aprioehriniles rotundus*"—which it wasn't; only he was very proud of being able to pronounce two such words (nine syllables between them, you will perceive), and brought them in whenever he thought there was an opportunity. At this the fairies were utterly disconcerted. The only remark the Kobold could think of was, "Nuch!" and the Cluricaune, who happened to be passing just then, was heard to murmur, "Bedad! that bates the Me-ugly-ary!" They held a hurried consultation, and determined to give up the attempt to teach this young Encyclopedia of Useless Information, and to try to amuse him by showing him some of those funny tricks for which fairies have been famous ever since the year one. (I suppose clever people like the Boy's father would point out that I must mean the year a.c. 4004; and then still cleverer people would show that that too was all nonsense, and that I must mean the year 5,000,000,000 or thereabouts; but I beg to state that when I say the year one I mean the year one—even though that should mean nothing at all). So they all began to perform the most wonderful conjuring tricks before him; they rubbed two mice into one, and made parched peas come out of their foxglove caps, and told him which blade of grass he had thought of, and drew reels and reels of cotton of all colours out of their mouths; and the Boy only said,

"I've seen it all done ever so much better at the Polytechnic with rabbits and cannon-balls, and cords and ribbons, instead of your stupid little things."

Now this was after they had been doing all sorts of marvellous things all day, and it was growing quite dark. So, instead of giving up in disgust, they sent a message to some Will o' the Wisp who lived near them, and they came and hopped and skipped about so wonderfully that all the fairies looked at the Boy in delight; for they felt that he would have to acknowledge that he had never seen anything like them before. But he said—

"I know what you are; you're only *ignes fatui*, and are caused by the generation of gas at the bottom of stagnant shallow pools in marshes; I can make things just like you in a saucer with a little phosphuret of lime."

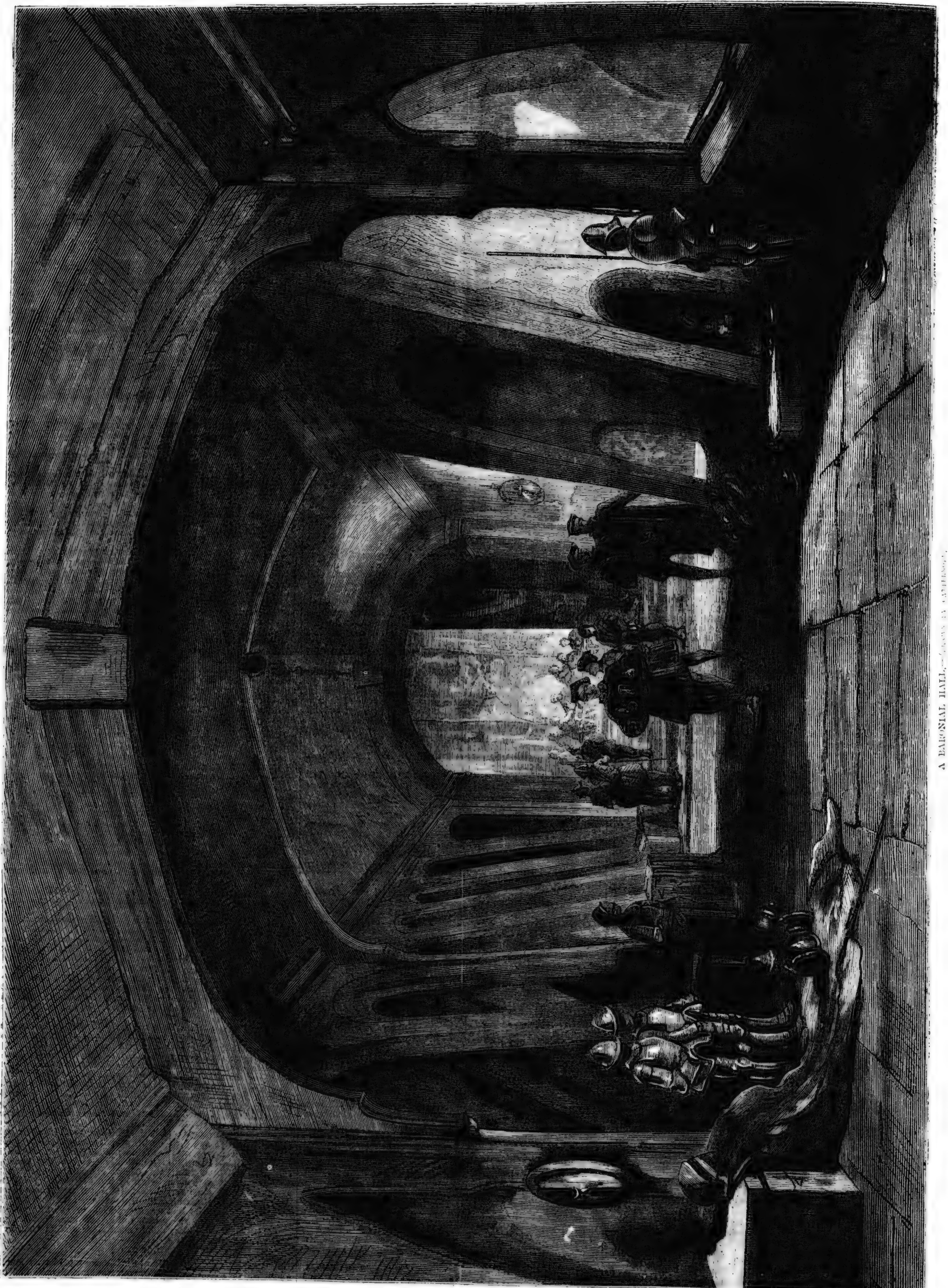
But this was going a little too far. The fairies had stood a good deal; but to have it insinuated that their old friends, the Will o' the Wisp, were little better than phosphuretted hydrogen gas was more than they could stand. So they all rushed at the Boy with one consent, and flew away with him to his nursery, where they found the little Fay already asleep, dreaming troubled dreams of G. C. M.'s; and I needn't tell you how glad she was to get back to Fairyland, away from this hard matter-of-fact world of Common Denominators. Soon after nearly all the fairies flew away to the moon, and I am afraid that there are now very few left in these parts.

Well, next morning the Boy told his nurse and his sister, and all the little boys and girls he knew, and finally his clever papa, about his adventures with the fairies; and, being all sufficiently sensible people—I mean self-sufficiently sensible—they none of them believed him. Except, perhaps, his mother—sometimes; now and then she thought, when he had been coming out triumphantly with some very long-tailed Latin words, and immediately afterwards smashing his little sister's toys, that it might have been a little fairy that was so quiet and obedient for a whole day; and that, if so, she wasn't quite sure that a fond, stupid little blue-eyed Fay didn't make a nicer child than even A CLEVER BABY.

MORAL.

Every fairy tale—especially at Christmas—must have a moral; and it will be a useful exercise for our young readers to find out the moral of this one. The author confesses that he hasn't an idea what it is himself.

EDWARD ROSE.



A BARONIAL HALL, ST. GEORGE'S, KENT.



HOME THROUGH THE WOOD — (DRAWN BY E. HUTTULA.)

HOME THROUGH THE WOOD.

Ah, those "short cuts!" How fascinating! and yet how deceptive they turn out to be, whether we venture on the effort to thread the mazes of a civic neighbourhood or are bent on making our way through the wood, where we fancy we can remember every rustic sign, and shape our course, as the gipsies do, by marks on doddered tree trunks, or mosses on the boles of giant oaks! There is something infectious, however, in the gaiety with which a large party go crunching over the crisp frosty path on a glorious day in winter; something stirring to the blood in the keen air, the jewelled boughs, all hung with sparkling rime; something that too often leads to self-abandonment and self-forgetfulness in the intoxicating draught of the pure cold air. Self-forgetfulness and deep devotion to sentiment which is the effect produced on some natures by frost and hot elder-wine, should be carefully guarded against during a "short cut," unless we are quite sure that we are going by a way known only to ourselves, and where we are not likely to plump in the midst of a merry and satirical party, who have come by a still shorter cut and lingered for us to enjoy our discomfiture. Some natures there are which can ignore the presence of all the world in the company of a beloved object; but they are not pervious to chaff, and so we need not sympathise with them. They can come home through the wood of misgiving, and find their way to the promised goal even through the tangled thickets of difficulty and parental caution.

HIS FIRST ENTERTAINMENT.

It was in a dull west of England market town that I first met Mr. Marmaduke Mills—the first time, I mean, that I met him in the flesh. I had come across him hundreds of times before, on dead walls and on hotel-tables, in the columns of the county paper, and on mysterious labels posted in mysterious corners. I had seen him as a foreign count with wonderful moustaches, as a shoe-black, as a cabman, as a Spanish dancer, as a young lady in an elaborate ball-dress, as old Mr. Crusty, the conventional port wine gentleman afflicted with the gout; and as one of those mild, stammering, and impossible young men compounded of the Mr. Verdant Green of Cuthbert Bede, and the Mr. Ledbury of Albert Smith.

It may be easily guessed that Marmaduke Mills was an entertainer. He was cheerful enough under the depressing circumstances of his life, and I can assure you that when the conventional waiter at the conventional commercial inn came down with the compliments of Mr. Marmaduke Mills to the gentleman from London, and "would it be any pleasure to him to smoke his cigar in company?" I caught at the chance greedily, and was not long in availing myself of the invitation of the gifted gentleman.

I can assure you that Christmas Eve at a deserted commercial inn, passed in your own society, is not the height of luxury. I had arrived by a late train. The snow was so heavy that I could not get on to The Firs, some ten miles distant, that night, and here I was destined to stay, and make my way to my destination next morning as best I could. Marmaduke Mills was my companion in adversity. It is well known that entertainers are the most persevering and industrious gentlemen in the world. He had given his entertainment at the Townhall of the market town on Christmas Eve; by the first train next morning he would be travelling as fast as he could to London. There he would eat his roast beef and plum-pudding, kiss Mrs. Mills and the infantine Milles, and appear punctually on Boxing Night at another townhall in the wilds of Lincolnshire.

No one in the world could have mistaken my friend for anything else but an entertainer. He was neither young nor old. His face was clean shaven; so clean, indeed, that his skin looked as if it had been pared. He was glad of an opportunity of talking with a gentleman from London; and as he discovered that I had myself some theatrical proclivities, and was not unknown at certain theatrical haunts, he became extremely confidential.

"It is not that I mind the life altogether," he said apologetically, "for it is active enough; and I can assure you I have enough to do; but what I hate about it is the misery of the dull evenings, after work. I am tired of commercial gentlemen. They are intelligent, sharp fellows, to be sure; but, as a rule, they talk secondhand from an old *Times* newspaper, and look down condescendingly upon entertainers. Then, you know, I never can induce them to sit up. By the time I have done my work they are yawning, which is hardly to be wondered at, considering they are generally up at six o'clock, bullying the boots, arranging those extraordinary cases, and preparing for the round of the day. I run home for a few hours occasionally, to get a peep at Mrs. Mills and the little ones; and if it were not for a copy of the *Era*, which is regularly posted to me every week, upon my word, I might just as well be at the Sandwich Islands!

"How did I come to be an entertainer? Well, it was a kind of a compromise. I had the stage fever very young, and it is one of those maladies not easily cured. Of course I might have done better for myself. This is easily said, but I would not give up this life, with all its worry and excitement, to make double the money at the desk.

"I was always entertaining. I took to it when I was four years old, and all through my boyhood I kept it up. I am bound to say my father encouraged me. I amused him and pleased his friends. He bought me wigs and properties, old swords and theatrical paraphernalia, and sent for me when he had a dinner party to show off before the gentlemen.

"The older I became the more furious raged the fever. I joined dramatic classes on the sly, and saved up my pocket-money to buy plays and candles. The plays I studied, and the candles enabled me to study at the dead of night. My sisters helped me on, and Mary, in particular, lent me all her dresses. My face was always very young, and Nature had given me certain gifts. I learnt a little of a great many things.

"I played the piano a little; I sang a little; I ventriloquised a little. I learned a little conjuring, and I worked unceasingly at my hobby.

"They soon found out at home that I was getting very bad. And so they tried the desperate measure of sending me to a City office, where I was perched upon a stool from eight to ten hours at a stretch. My sister Mary was my faithful friend. The dull, monotonous routine of a merchant's office was killing me, and every night when I went into Mary's room to bid her good-by I poured my sorrows into her ear.

"She soon gathered from what I told her that it would not be long before I ran away and joined some company of strolling players.

"She was afraid of my determination, and she made me promise, on my honour, that I would do nothing without consulting her.

"She said it would break her heart if I ran away, and I loved my sister Mary.

"Still, moth-like, I kept burning my wings at the candle. I went to the play at least three times a week, all unknown to my father, who, unfortunately, tried the desperate remedy of a sudden operation instead of gentle restoratives. I kept on with the dramatic classes, and the more successful I became, the more applause I won, the worse the fever raged.

"In a dirty hall, in a little back street in Islington, I one night made a great hit. It was so dazzled with the brilliancy of the footlights, with the eager faces, with the rounds of applause, with the genuine enthusiasm of the audience, that I came home excited and wilful, obstinate and determined. I implored Mary to release me from my promise.

"She, like a dear girl, had previously sounded them all at home. She walked round the subject delicately, and attacked my father in his most vital part. He was an old player himself. He loved the stage; but when it came to his son being an actor, that was quite another thing. He fairly admitted that there were scores of gentlemen on the stage; that many were welcomed into

the very best society; but still, he did not intend that his son should go on the stage. He vowed that, if I dared to disobey him and turn actor, he would turn me out of doors and never set eyes on me again.

"It was Mary who suggested a compromise.

"She knew what I could do, how versatile I was, how I could sing and dance, and do all sorts of odd clever tricks; and, in a rough way, she suggested an entertainment. She did not know much about it, but she gave the outline of the plan very completely. Besides, she thought the entertainment notion would not irritate the home authorities so much as the play-acting. At any rate, the experiment might be tried.

"It was to be a secret to everybody. I was to change my name, get hold of a dramatic author, take a West-End hall, and try the experiment.

"If I failed, no one would be much the wiser, and I might still retain my City clerkship. If I succeeded — Well, there was time enough to talk about that presently.

"But how about the money?"

"Poor Mary had not thought of that.

"I shall require at least a hundred pounds," I said; "fifty pounds for the dramatic author, and fifty pounds for the preliminary advertisements."

"Here was the first dash of cold water; but 'Nothing venture, nothing have,' was my motto; and on reflection I thought it would not be a bad plan to try the effect of impudence, and see if my backer had any faith with me.

"There was a keen business man who had known me since childhood, and who was quite aware what I could do. He had praised me again and again, and ridiculed my father's severity.

"This was in the early days of entertainments, and the old gentleman knew the public pretty well.

"Aggravated at my own impudence, I consulted my old friend and revealed to him Mary's plan. He caught at the notion at once, and he backed his opinion by offering to advance me the hundred pounds, and a trifle more for dresses, on the condition that, if I succeeded, he would ask me for the money at some future day; and if I failed he would say no more about it.

"Strict secrecy was enjoined. No one was to know anything about it but Mary and our old friend. The next thing was to find out a dramatic author. I knew no authors, and belonged to no literary class. But, from the front row of the pit, I had observed all the critics who attend the first representation of new plays.

"I chose out one with the kindest face, and made bold to stop him one night when the play was over, and asked him when I could see him on a little matter of business.

"He appointed the next morning, at his chambers, in a street off the Strand; and then I unfolded my daring project.

"Now, my later experience tells me that there are so-called authors who would have no objection to taking in a young fellow like myself and doing for him completely. They have got a name, and do not think that bad entertainments will ruin it. They look upon young enthusiasts like myself as candidates for Bedlam, inexperienced fellows eaten up with conceit, to be treated with complete disdain.

"No doubt their large experience warrant these thoughts. Still there may be a 'rara avis' in the flock; and I need hardly say that they pocket the honorarium, though they scamp the work.

"I was very lucky, however, in my author. His experience was vast, and without his assistance I should never have been telling you this tale. Before he knew what I could do he dissuaded me gently from my project. He had seen so many failures. Money had been thrown away so very constantly. Though he was sacrificing fifty pounds, my friend advised me to pause.

"Then I sat down at his piano, and showed him what I could do. I sang scraps of songs, and suggested tricks; I caught up an anti-macassar, and played a lady; the poker was my property for one character, and a long pipe for a second.

"You will do," said my friend, pleasantly. "I will write for you with pleasure."

"He worked like a trump for me. He wrote his best songs, introduced all my best business; made me conjure and ventriloquise; taught me how to make up the face; practised me in the very difficult art of a rapid change; and procured for me an entertainer's table designed by himself, with an elaborate but most useful system of counter-weights.

"He certainly earned his money—every farthing of it, and he predicted a great success for the new and original entertainment called 'The Pack of Cards.'

"Mary was in the highest spirits. We used to walk out together on Sunday and see if the billstickers had done their duty. 'Mr. Marmaduke Mills in his New Entertainment of 'The Pack of Cards' greeted us at every turn. The bills were very showy, and, thanks to my friend, the advertising was capitally done.

"The evening of the entertainment was fixed for Christmas Eve, this very night two years ago. I shall never forget it. My author had promised to bring all his friends belonging to the press, and he was quite as anxious about my success as I was myself.

"He gave me the most elaborate instructions as to what I was to eat and what to drink on the fatal day, but I was so excited that I was sick from morning until the dreadful hour arrived.

"Mary had been my friend all through. It was in her room at night that I rehearsed. She helped me with my properties, and I soon saw that without her I should fail altogether.

"I consulted my friend, and he said that a professional dresser would never do. I must have some one near me to whom I was accustomed—a woman if possible.

"Dear Mary consented to see me through the first night with the 'Pack of Cards,' for I told her fairly that if she deserted me I should break down completely.

"With very guilty faces we contrived an excuse for getting away from home on Christmas Eve.

"I told them that a friend of mine had given me tickets to see a new entertainer called Marmaduke Mills, who was coming out that evening at the Sphinx Rooms.

"What is he going to do?" growled my father.

"Well, they call it 'A Pack of Cards,'" answered Mary, looking very bored.

"A pack of nonsense, more likely," continued the parent. "I dare say he is an impostor or an idiot."

"Or both," I suggested, mildly.

"It will be very slow, I expect," said Mary, acting to perfection. "Do you think it is worth while going?"

"Well, I hardly know," I chimed in. "Still, as Larkins has given us the tickets, it will be hardly civil to shirk it. On the whole, I think we had better support this Marmaduke Mills."

"Well, go then; and joy go with you. I would not go for a hundred pounds."

"These were my father's words; and I need hardly say that I would have given him a hundred pounds to keep him away.

"My author came round five minutes before the curtain was rung up, and in order to encourage me whispered that the critic of the *Times* and the representatives of all the leading papers were in front.

"I commenced, of course, with the usual address in dress clothes; and Mary was at her post prepared for the first change.

"I was as nervous as a kitten; but Mary cheered me on. I bungled with the entertainer's table, was too rapid with my first character; and as Mary and I struggled with the mechanical arrangements we felt something was wrong.

"However, there was no time to be lost; and in my excitement I paid little attention to the strange noise which the audience heard distinctly as I popped up. 'Hang the table!' I muttered to myself; 'something wants oiling. The weights won't act.'

"I got through capitally with my first character. The audience roared; and in my excitement I forgot my nervousness.

"Down I went again. Mary was as pale as death. She seemed to bungle with the properties; and I chafed my little assistant, and persisted that I was the pluckier of the two.

"Up I went again, as the timid young gentleman. This was a greater triumph than before, and I was encored in my first song—a supposed duet between the timid gentleman and a gushing soprano.

"I descended amidst great applause. Mary was paler than ever. 'I persisted that I was doing very well, and that she need not be alarmed. She only smiled very faintly, and said she hoped it was all right.'

"My next change was into woman's dress, and here I required Mary's aid particularly. But she was awkward and slow. She did her best; but I saw she was put out with something.

"I got rather cross, and implored her to be a little quicker. This change was to be the effect of the evening. I got dressed somehow, squabbling with Mary all the time, and up I came amidst a murmur of astonishment.

"I felt that my triumph was complete, and during the interval which took place between the parts the author came round and congratulated me warmly on my success.

"Only get through the next part as well and your future is made. But, come, take a little refreshment, or you will be exhausted."

"Mary was ready with a bottle of stout; and, though she still seemed put out, nervous, and dull, I really had no time to cheer her up or ask her what could be the matter with her.

"The second part went on brilliantly; but I was annoyed—my assistant had broken down so thoroughly, though she tried to do her best.

"It is so very hot down here, dear," she said; 'but I will try and help you.'

"I could see she was struggling on; and she actually brightened up when I went above for the last time and came down again, the audience cheering loudly and the little band playing 'God Save the Queen.'

"I was wild with excitement; and, just as I was, with the point on my face, and streaming down with perspiration, I caught my sister in my arms to thank her for her assistance and make up for my irritability.

"Oh, darling! for God's sake, don't!" she said. 'My arm, darling; my poor, poor arm!'

"This was all she said. In another minute she had fainted away.

"What do you think, Sir, had happened?" said Mr. Marmaduke Mills, the tears coursing one another down his cheeks at the recollection of his sister's heroic deed.

"That dear sister of mine had broken her arm five minutes after the entertainment began, and she 'kept up' to save her brother. Upon my honour, Sir, I think that Mary's heroism was as great as that of any soldier who rushed up to certain death at the storming of the Redan. She is a grand character, Sir."

I quite concurred in the sentiment of Mr. Marmaduke Mills.

C. W. SCOTT.

A STRANGE GIFT AND A STRANGE GUEST.

(Continued from the ILLUSTRATED TIMES, Dec. 17, page 398.)

III. THE GIFT AND THE GUEST.

Schmil had just made up his mind to call out at any risk, when he heard a shrill whistle just above him, and presently a great dog came bounding down the mountain path, and, seeing him, gave a deep bay, and at once commenced springing up in the effort to seize him—a purpose that might have been accomplished but for the appearance of a man, who was at first too much astonished to do more than call the beast off, and then stood staring with all his might. He was a tall, broad-shouldered, powerful fellow, with a sunburnt face, covered by a big brown beard. He wore a loose woollen blouse, and great thigh boots, and carried a woodman's small axe in his leathern belt.

"Well, young Jack-in-the-Box," he said presently, "how came you in that plight? Are you put there as a sign-post or are you locked out?" Then he came closer and looked at Schmil, who could not answer, for the simple reason that he had fainted. The stranger strode round to the door, found it fast, removed the bar, broke the lock with a blow of his axe, and went in. Then, mounting the bench, which he took down from the wall, he began cutting away the planks beneath the chimney-hole, and at the moment of their breaking caught the lad on his strong arm, and laid him on the ground to hold a flask to his lips. Schmil came to himself, and clung to his preserver as a baby clings to its mother.

"What is your name? and how came you here?" said the woodman; but the boy would tell him nothing till they had gone out of the hut—when he picked up his knapsack, and, seizing the tall man by the arm, burst out crying for the first time since he had left home.

"My name's Schmil Schwartz," he sobbed, "and my father lives at Wegscheid."

The stranger stopped, turned round, and placing his great hands on the boy's shoulders, looked at him with a strange expression of face.

"And where are you going?"

"Wherever you go till I can get on the high road to Vienna." The woodman said nothing for a few minutes, and then turning again, and looking at Schmil in the same way, answered quietly:—"Very well, I am going to the Woodman's village beyond the Weichselboden; after that we shall see. Now tell me how you came here and why you left home."

Schmil made rather a roundabout story of it, and had to stop in the middle of it to get a draught of water from a spring that lay beside the path, but he got to the end of it before they had passed through the wild ravines shut in by precipitous rocks and vast walls of stone, which lead to the mountain forests.

It grew dark before they had reached the road, and to the boy's surprise a kind of rough cart or dray was waiting there, drawn by two powerful horses, and led by a teamster who touched his hat to the stranger, and placed a great bundle of straw in the vehicle for the two passengers, while the big dog followed with his huge red tongue hanging from his mouth.

Schmil never quite knew how long he slept on that journey, but he awoke with a jolt, and felt himself lifted into a blaze of light, which, as soon as he could get his eyes open, he saw came from half a dozen pine torches stuck in iron staples against the stone walls of a great shed or barn, where a dozen sturdy men were sitting at supper at a rough deal table. There was a delicious smell of soup, and as they advanced all the men rose and saluted the strange woodman, making room for him on a bench at the top of the table, where he hoisted Schmil into a seat by his side, and placed a big porringer of stew before him. Schmil was too hungry to ask questions; but he had to give a few answers, for his deliverer inquired again about the talk of the two men who had shut him up in the hut? and, when he had recounted all that part of his story his new friend called two men aside, and sitting down at the corner of the table, which he cleared for the purpose, wrote a letter which he gave to one to take to Vienna, and whispered a few instructions to the other, of which, however, Schmil heard enough to convince him that the man was commissioned to go to Wegscheid and tell his father that he was safe and would be home in three months from that day.

"Now, comrades," said this strange protector, "addressing the rest of the company, 'we start to-morrow. You all know me, and that I shall keep to my bargain. This lad here is my lad by right of my having taken him out of prison, and he goes with us. Whoever does him a good turn does a good turn to me, and, on the word of a woodman, I shan't forget it. Let us drink to our success and then turn in, for we must be off early.'

Mugs of beer were then drawn from a cask in a corner of the hut, and as each man swallowed a quart he rose and said, 'Here's luck to us all, and to our master Woodman, Wilhelm Wald!'

On the following morning they set out, a band of as sturdy fellows as could be seen in a week's journey, and under as stout a leader as could be found in a month. Wherever he went he paid

well, and everybody welcomed him and seemed to court his grave smile and the beam of his light brown eyes.

Schmil was altering every hour, and longed to try how he could wield the axe, but he had to mend boots for those whose boots needed mending, even after the party reached its destination; at last, however, he was gratified. His willingness to do this humble work won him golden opinions; and one morning the leader, in whose cabin he lived, and who had already begun to call him "son," gave him his first lesson in woodcraft. It was tremendous work, and Schmil was a pigmy at it as yet; but he began to grow strong, and there was a charm about the wild, strange life in that new country, for they had gone on to the Austrian Alps, in the place where the great timber-slides conveyed mighty trees and ponderous beams down the awful mountain slopes to the river, where they are floated onward till they are formed into rafts to make the voyage of the Danube and rush into the sea that they may be built into ships.

There were great preparations in the little village of Wegscheid for the proper keeping of Christmas, and the Schwartz family were fully occupied in the preliminary scrubbing and cleaning which was a part of the observance of the season. Honest Karl was almost at his wits' ends with it; and, though he never displayed any other symptom of irritation than an increased consumption of tobacco, and an occasionally rubbing of his honest head, he thought that cleanliness itself might be overdone when it took the form of scouring the very lapstones, and sweeping the odds and ends of the workshop into remote corners. There were other causes for anxiety, however, which troubled both him and his wife. They had heard nothing of Schmil since they received a message from a strange woodman that the boy had fallen in with one Wilhelm Wald, and had gone to try his fortune far away in the mountains without going first to Vienna. That same woodman, though he had left them a little black-looking newspaper containing a list of the prizes of the Great Imperial Lottery, among which was the number 99, had not informed them, nor did the paper inform them, how much hard cash that number represented, nor why the payment of the money was delayed—as delayed it certainly was. Karl, who was too busy to go to Vienna to make inquiries, had determined to put the matter off till after Christmas, in the hope that Schmil would be at home and might accompany him, when one morning a great clatter of wheels was heard in the village street, followed by a thundering knock at the shoemaker's door. There was no need to knock, for the door itself was only fastened with a latch, and the importunate visitor made his appearance immediately afterwards, hat in hand. He was a spruce, rosy, well-shaved, shining gentleman, and as he advanced he saluted the family with a beaming smile, announcing himself as Mr. Groschen, a Government agent, deputed to the pleasing duty of introducing a small fortune which was at present being conveyed to the fortunate holder of the eighth share of the lottery prize represented by the ticket numbered "99," which eighth share was, in fact, borne by a superb jäger (whose black plume nearly touched the ceiling) in an armful of chubby-looking bags.

Karl was speechless with surprise, and expected to see the jäger draw his hanger, slit open the bags, and pour out the coins in a golden or silver stream upon the floor; Katinka went into a state of childish wonder, not unmixed with fear; Emil began to compute by mental arithmetic how many "good gulden" would go into each sack, and everybody was for the time speechless. The good wife was the first to recover her composure, and to recognise the duties as well as the privileges of property. The best parlour had received its final beautification that morning; there was a bottle or two of Ofner in the little cellar by the woodhouse, kept for special occasions; and some cakes had been baked only yesterday for the Christmas week. In less than ten minutes the visitors were seated, the wine was handed round, and Karl had begun to understand a little about the necessary legal discharge of the official responsibility before the splendid jäger had eaten his third cake and swallowed his first half-pint of red wine. It was such a simple and such a rapid transaction that it was almost disappointing, and the money-bags lying on the shelf of the parlour cupboard, where they had been deposited, looked comparatively insignificant. Agent and jäger had said farewells, expressed congratulations, pocketed gratuities and commissions, and were actually out of the door again before Karl had time to protest against taking the money; and he was thinking of giving chase to the carriage and setting this matter right when he was startled by the conduct of a rosy-cheeked sturdy lad, who suddenly hurled himself into his arms and nearly forced him backward into the shop. He couldn't at first recognise that it was Schmil, and in his confusion had forgotten to ask who was the tall bearded man who followed him in. This individual, in fact, was left to contemplate the row of boots in the shop, on which he seemed to concentrate his attention; for Schmil had been surrounded by the entire family, and was being hugged and kissed to death till he disengaged himself, and, taking the stranger by the hand, led him in amongst them all. It was some time before they could settle down to reasonable talk.

"I see you have come into your lucky winnings," said Wilhelm Wald, indicating the money-bags with a jerk of his thumb. "You had my message three months ago, and you see it has all come true. There is your prize and here is your son. Have I not begun to make a man of him?"

He had, indeed, but he must tell them all about it. Would he condescend to come into the big room, where there was a good fire, and the wife would give them all some coffee and hot bread, after which would he condescend to smoke a pipe that had been a heirloom in their family for three generations? He was so hale and strong, so handsome, so genial, that they felt at home with him, although the good wife took care to turn the key of the parlour door and put it in her pocket. The pipe was hanging over the chimney-piece, and he stood up to look at it curiously, then turned and looked as curiously at Karl, who himself wore a puzzled, thoughtful expression. Over the coffee Wald told them all about Schmil and their first meeting, where they had been, and how the boy was to be a woodman if the father willed it so. As he was speaking, little Katinka crept close to him and looked so wistfully into his face that there seemed to be some kind of sympathy between them, for his strong arm was put round the child, and presently he lifted her on to his knee, and, parting her hair, kissed her on the brow. "She is like her grandmother," he said, and a tear glistened in his eye and fell on the child's head.

Was it the voice, or a turn of the face, or some familiar gesture that revealed him in spite of such outward changes as years had wrought? It was something, for Karl sprang to his feet and gasped out, "Emil!—brother!"

What need to describe the scene, then? Late into the night the wonderful story—wonderful to those simple souls—was told and listened to; the outline first, then the details. The outline must suffice for us, for it is all that the present narrator has heard.

"You remember that last visit that I paid you, dear Karl; but you did not know that under all that reckless gaiety of manner I was wretched—wretched with remorse—wretched with unrepented wrong—wretched because even then I saw ruin staring me in the face. I had gained my grade of Sub-Lieutenant, but that was all. I felt that no career was open to me; for, though I had done nothing publicly to disgrace my cloth, I had made acquaintances and formed habits that must prevent my succeeding in any profession, even in that of a soldier. One of the worst of my evil courses was gambling, and though, as you know, there are no public gaming-houses in Vienna, there were plenty of private resorts—secret haunts, where vice was easy, and a return to reason made more difficult at each visit. Of two of these I was an habitué, one where I met men of a rank far above my own, and even some of my superior officers; another where cheats and blacklegs, and broken-down gamblers, played for small stakes, and poisoned their victims with drugged drink. One was a glittering saloon, with rank and wealth, and even beauty, to add to its allurements; the other a

sordid room where every visitor looked into his neighbour's face to guess how low he had fallen before he came there. I played at both, won at both, lost at both, as luck favoured or forsook me. It was my misfortune to have cultivated that gaiety of manner which is attractive to most people in society. It gained me the entrée to places which my rank, or even my education, would not have entitled me, and I was a favourite no less at some of the aristocratic salons to which my comrades introduced me, than at the places of ordinary resort. So I went on from month to month, for a long time, in debt, dissipated, extravagant, careless, or, at all events, determined to stifle care, and probably a dangerous companion, though I was so young. My brother officers, even up to the higher grade, winked at some irregularities, and most of them liked me. There was one exception, and he was one to be disliked by whom was no disgrace; for he was a worse man than I, and that is saying much. He began by endeavouring to degrade me by base reports, and, finding that ineffectual, ended by hating me. The worst of it was that he became my superior officer before I had discovered the reason of his animosity. He was anxious to ingratiate himself with a lady who was then a rising artiste in the Kärntner Thor Opera, and has since risen to high rank in her profession as a singer. I will not name her. We have not exchanged a word for many a year, though our last parting was a strange one, as you shall hear. I had known her father, who was a musician, of whom I took lessons before I began my downward career, and, if I did not love her, I would have died to serve her, she was so sweet and gentle. We had not met for many months, when, at the very height of my folly and extravagance, my turn came for leave of absence, and I took my furlough—not to come home or to seek a change and a chance of an altered life, but to plunge more deeply in dissipation. It was my last day of leave, and I determined to spend the evening at the Apollo Saal, where I could dance and drink away the time till the expiration of my period of liberty, which expired at nine o'clock. You know that all classes—that is, of the respectable order—go there to promenade, if not to dance; and late in the evening, as I was flushed and excited, I saw a party of my acquaintances enter the room, among whom was the lady I speak of, accompanied by her father. She had never been there before, and, in some surprise, I went up to speak to her. At the same moment the officer who regarded me as his rival entered by another door, where he had evidently been watching, and, pushing past me, stood between us, offering her his arm, which she refused. I was almost breathless with indignation, and asked him in a low tone whether he intended to insult me or the lady, upon which he started back, and in a loud voice proclaimed me 'a deserter,' at the same time holding out his watch. It was past the hour at which my parole terminated, for the clock at the Saal was half an hour slow; but, regardless of any consequences, I sprang forward and struck my accuser to the ground; then, conscious that I should be disgraced and ruined for such an act, fled from the place, and took refuge in one of the lowest parts of the city. I will not tell you now to what straits I was reduced, for I was penniless, hiding by day like a wolf, and only going out at night. I dared not sell my uniform, but I parted with the few trinkets I wore, and lived on the money as best I could, getting lower and lower, till I was in rags—a beggar in everything but the fact of begging. I might have held out longer, but the accursed desire for play held me in slavery even then, and I lost first gold, then silver, and at last copper stakes, till poverty and evil companionship brought me to the very borders of crime, and I became a starving wretch, ready to yield at the first temptation. At least, I thought so; but, thank Heaven, I was not yet at that low ebb, though others thought so too, for I had become known to the seum of the city who haunt its dark places and are sworn to keep each other's secrets. One night, famished, fearful of being taken and branded, and yet half desperate, I had but one small coin left, enough to buy soup at one of those places where the poverty-stricken congregate. You may have heard of it—it is a great room, with a thick plank supported on tressels serving for a table. In this plank small cavities, each holding about a pint, are scooped out at intervals, one for each sifter, and into these the attendant pours the mess from a great can; the iron spoon with which to eat being chained to the table beside each guest. I was on my way thither; but, from some whim, turned in to a low tavern on my way, perhaps in the hope of finding someone better off than myself who would pay for a more ample meal. My attention was at once attracted to a stalwart, burly man dressed much as I am now, who had evidently found his way there by mistake, and was looking in some surprise at the company in the squalid room. Lounging at one end of the place were three fellows whom I knew as three of the greatest villains in Vienna, and they were already regarding the stranger as their lawful prey. He was still standing, evidently intending to leave as soon as he could drink the beer which he had called for; and, as I stood there observing them, one of the three waylaid the waiter and held him for a few seconds in conversation, when another presently joined them, and, while the attention of the man was diverted, seemed to me to drop something into the tankard which he carried in his hand.

"Almost without thinking what I did, I strode forward; but the stranger had already taken the big measure in his hand, and had placed it to his lips for a mighty draught. There was no time to hesitate. I pushed forward, and, pretending to lose my balance, drove full against him, dashing the whole quart of liquor down his beard. It was so quickly done that no one but the waiter observed it—not even the three men, who had retreated to a table where they could watch the door; but I was only just in time to avoid the heavy blow aimed at my face by the man, who fancied that I had insulted him. It lighted on my arm and nearly broke it, but I continued to look him in the face with an expression of warning as I told the waiter to bring another tankard. When the man had gone, I said, 'Don't drink here; your beer was drugged,' and walked out at the door.

"He followed me. 'What do you mean?' he said, laying a grip like iron upon my shoulder.

"I mean that there are three men there who will follow you presently to see how the spell works," I said. 'Are you armed?'

"Yes," he said, holding up his great fists, in one of which was a short cudgel. 'Let them come; but do me one more favour and take me out of this.'

"My knowledge of the Durchhäuser—those short passages from street to street between the houses—was pretty perfect; my knowledge of the slums of the city almost as intimate; and, before the three gentlemen could trouble my new acquaintance with their polite attentions, I had twisted and turned him into a more respectable locality, where, if I turned, for I had reached the border-land of safety for myself.

"Stop!" he cried; 'tell me your name at least, and let me help you if I can; you don't seem in good feather in this place, why not come with me?'

"To do what?'

"What? Why, to join the jolly woodmen and do a man's work. What's your name now?'

"Wilhelm Wald, in future."

"Well, then, Wilhelm, take these ten florins; and, if you are of the mettle I think you are, buy yourself a rig-out—blouse, boots, and hat—and meet me to-morrow at the Golden Ox."

"And your name?'

"Max Brunm; but ask for No. 99."

"So Max Brunm became my master, and now I am master in his place, which knows him no more, because he has gone home to his wife in the Tyrol, where Schmil and I will go to see him next year."

"But do you go to Vienna, now, Emil? Is it safe?'

"Yes. Good friends, when they heard that I was a new man, made interest for me, and I have the Emperor's pardon in safe keeping. The lady I told you of laid my case before his Majesty, even while I was in hiding; but I had vanished, and it was only by accident that I was discovered."

"How was that?'

"Why, I thought I was so safe in my altered dress, size, and looks, that I went one day into a lottery office, having the whim to buy a chance, and who should be there but that very lady, with her eldest boy in her hand. She knew me in a minute, directly she heard my voice, and frightened me, too, by calling out my name. But my pardon was signed long before."

"Then, Emil, this money is yours."

"What money?'

"This prize. It is your number—'ninety-nine.'"

"Not a bit of it. I bought it for you; and if you don't want it, save it for my little namesake, here. I'll take care of Schmil."

FRANZ DORRIT.

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

CHRISTMAS is here!

What say the bells

In Old Time's ear,

While their jubilant melody sinks and swells?
Recall thou the Past ere the year shall depart:
Has Charity found a bright home in thy heart?
Has Mercy sped forth like a comforting dove
O'er the dark waves of life on its errand of love?
Has Hope cast its anchor where billows ne'er roll?
Have Faith and Forgiveness their shrine in thy soul?
What snow-shroud of woe hast thou melt'd to mirth,
What light hast thou shed on the desolate hearth,
What flower hast thou planted so beautiful 'twas given,
With germs to bloom fairer and sweeter in heaven?

Christmas is here!

Christmas is here!

What say the bells,

Ringing loud and clear,

Whose echoes, like sprites, fly o'er moorlands and fells?
Do they speak to thy memory's thrilling cords:—
Of ungenerous deeds and of bitter words,
Of duties neglected, of trust betrayed,
Of heartbreak and ruin by hatred made,
Of the clasping hands that are now estranged,
Of the faith that faltered, the love that changed,
Of a young flock scattered from home's dear fold,
Of truth that was bartered for glittering gold,
Of sympathy's solacing balm unshed,
And a wreath whose leaves are all sullied or dead?

Christmas is here!

Christmas is here!

What say the bells?

Some we held dear

Have passed o'er the hills where the Good Shepherd dwells,
To the fair land afar, to the Eden of love,
Not lost, but gone home to their kindred above.
There's a vacant chair, and a darkened door,
And a cradle that needs to be rock'd no more.
Christmas comes round, and its blessedness cheers,
But we cannot see Heaven through the mists of tears.
Faith takes our hand, and her guidance we trust
Through the Valley of Fear, for our Father is just.
So let the dirge pass. Come, children, in bands,
Be thankful and merry, and clap your wee hands
Christmas is here!

Christmas is here!

Ring out, ye old bells!

For I love to hear

Your musical peals with their joyous spells;
For they seem to fall from the starry spheres,
Like an angel's song in a world of tears;
Enchanting my thoughts to the realms of bliss,
And a better and happier home than this,
And to Him who was crowned the "Prince of Peace,"
That war, and oppression, and wrong might cease.
Oh! dawn on the world, thou glorious day,
When monarchs the sceptre of love shall sway;
For love, through Christ, is the king of all,
And love shall triumph when kingdoms fall.
Christmas is here!

SHELDON CHADWICK.

"A BARONIAL HALL."

THE artist whose quaint medieval pictures have gained such a wide reputation was likely to have depicted truthfully the old hall of which we hear so much in relation to its jollity, plenty, and comfort. Our illustration may be regarded as a genuine representation of one of those buildings which resounded with the noisy mirth and rough tumult of the banquet "where the beards wagged all," and the bear's head was brought in with shouts, and the ypcras was handed round in stoups, and men slipped down from their seats and went to sleep in the rushes with which the floor was strewn. For our own part, we would rather share the more refined comforts of the modern dining-room, even though "a neat-handed Phillis" should have superseded the stout serving men, and the collar of brawn, peacock-pie, and plum-porridge be replaced by a haunch of Welsh mutton, a modest turkey, and a pound pudding.

FIRST MEETING OF THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.

THE inaugural meeting of this body, to whom is intrusted the carrying out of the provisions of the Education Act of last Session in the metropolis, took place, on Thursday, Dec. 15, in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, which has for the present been placed at the disposal of the board on days when it is not required by the Corporation. As might have been expected, a considerable amount of interest was manifested in the proceedings, a large number of persons assembling to witness them should they, as was anticipated, be open to the public. Two o'clock was the hour fixed for commencing; for nearly an hour before it arrived the members of the board were passing through the corridor, and on their way many of those who were best known were greeted with cheers, decidedly the greater share of honour being bestowed on Miss Garrett and Miss Emily Davies. The question of publicity was quickly decided in the affirmative, and the press and the public were forthwith admitted.

Alderman Cotton, one of the City members of the board, was called to the chair, having on his right the Recorder of London, who acted as assessor; and on his left Mr. Kekewich, who attended on behalf of the Privy Council. The members generally occupied the places of the Common Councilmen, while Miss Garrett and Miss Davies were seated at the table crossing the chamber, which is usually filled by the Corporation officials.

The business was commenced by the Recorder calling attention to the fact that one direction in the Act was that the names of the members present, as well as of those who voted on any question, should be recorded. The names were then called over, and it was found that all the members were present except Mr. John M'Gregor, who is one of the representatives of Greenwich.

The first question to excite discussion was whether or not a salary should be attached to the office of chairman; which, on the motion of Professor Huxley, was decided in the negative. Four gentlemen were then nominated for the chairmanship—namely, Lord Lawrence, Mr. Charles Reed, M.P., Mr. M'Culloch Torrens, M.P., and Professor Huxley. The voting, which was taken by ballot, resulted in the election of the two first-named gentlemen as chairman and vice-chairman respectively. A committee to prepare a programme of business, investigate the recommendations of candidates for the office of secretary, &c., was then appointed; and, having transacted other preliminary business, the board adjourned, after a sitting of over three hours.

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